THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

EDITED BY

JAMES HASTINGS, D.D.

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THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

EDITED BY THE REV.

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'THE EXPOSITORY TIMES' 'THE DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE'

'THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS'

AND OTHER WORKS

ASSISTED BY B. A. CLARK

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

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THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

INTRODUCTION

I.

ITS FORM.

ANY Exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians must begin by recognizing the fact that it is a letter, and by giving that fact its proper value.

1. Some of the most important literature of antiquity exists in the form of letters. The correspondence of men prominent in political and literary life often throws a clear light upon the conditions of the age and reveals the forces, civic, social and religious, which were operative in the time to which the letters belong.

¶ A familiar example is the correspondence between the younger Pliny and the emperor Trajan in the early years of the second Christian century. Pliny was governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor, and, in the discharge of that office, sent letters and reports to his master, to some of which we possess the emperor's replies. One of these letters of Pliny describes the beliefs and practices of the Christians in his province and asks for instructions as to the best way of dealing with them. The letter opens to our view the situation, struggles, sufferings, and successes of the early Church. It shows how the ranks of believers were increasing by additions from all classes of society; how the strange 'superstition,' as Pliny thought it, was spreading like a contagion in city and country; how the heathen shrines were almost deserted and the practice of sacrifice in danger of being abandoned. It reflects the piety, devotion, and blameless life of the Christians of the period, describing how they were accustomed to meet at night and to sing hymns of praise to Christ. It enables us to see them assembled at their common meal, the 'love-feast,' at the close of which they solemnly celebrated the Holy Supper instituted by Christ. It depicts their orderliness and sobriety, and describes the solemn promises by which they bound themselves to abstain from all impurity and crime, and to live a holy life.[1]

2. 'The epistolary form,' says Bengel, 'is a pre-eminence of the Scriptures of the New Testament as compared with those of the Old.' It is a suggestive remark, reminding us of that open communication and equal participation of revealed truth which is the prerogative of the latter above the former dispensation; indicating too that the teacher and the taught are placed on one common level in the fellowship of truth. The Prophets delivered *oracles to the people,* but the Apostles wrote *letters to the brethren,* letters characterized by all that fullness of unreserved explanation, and that play of various feeling, which are proper to that form of intercourse. It is in

[1] G. B. Stevens, *The Message of the Bible,* 3.

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its nature a more familiar communication between those who are, or should be, equals.

3. St. Paul was apparently the first to recognize the full possibilities that lay in a letter as a means of conveying religious instruction. The closest parallel to the letters of Paul is to be found in the letters of Ignatius, seven in number, consisting of four written from Smyrna to churches which he had not visited, and of three written from Troas to churches and to Polycarp, who were personally known to him. Letters of a similar character are also found among the early Christian writings attributed to Clement and Polycarp, and also the very beautiful *Epistle to Diognetus*. The *Epistle to Barnabas* is only epistolary in form, and has not the personal note of these other writings. The method of Paul thus continued throughout the early centuries of Christendom, and bequeathed a form to its earliest literature.

¶ Those who desire to know the outward appearance of such a letter as the Epistle to the Ephesians will find an excellent description in Milligan's *Thessalonians*. 'There can be no doubt,' he says, 'that, like other letter-writers of his time, St. Paul wrote his letters in papyrus.

The pith of the stem of the papyrus-plant was cut into long strips which were laid down vertically to form a lower or outward layer. Over this a corresponding number of strips were then placed horizontally; and the two layers were pressed together to form one sheet, the process being assisted by a preparation of glue, moistened, when possible, with the turbid water of the Nile, which was supposed to add strength to it. After being dried in the sun, and rubbed down with ivory or a smooth shell to remove any roughness, the sheet was ready for use. For a brief note, like the Epistle to Philemon, a single sheet would suffice, but, when more space was required, it was easily procurable by fastening the requisite number of sheets together to form a roll. The matter was arranged in columns of from two to three inches wide, which were as a rule placed close together, so that there would be little room for the marginal annotations St. Paul is sometimes credited with having made, unless we are to think of these as inserted at the top or bottom of the sheet. When finished, the roll was rolled round upon itself, and fastened together with a thread, and in ordinary letters the address or title was then written on the back of the roll. In the case of more important literary works, which would be preserved in libraries, a small strip of papyrus containing the title was frequently attached to the end of the roll for the purpose of identification.'[1]

II.

THE WRITER.

Who wrote this letter to the Ephesians? The writer's name, according to custom, should be given at the beginning. What do we read? 'Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.' It professes to be written by St. Paul. Was it so?

1. Tradition has always ascribed the authorship of the Epistle to the Ephesians to St. Paul. It is assumed by all the early Fathers who have quoted from the Epistle. At the same time, the question is not so simple as might appear. The Epistle stands out from all the other writings of St. Paul by the presence of well-marked characteristics not found elsewhere. These peculiarities are both positive and negative. To begin with, there is a complete absence of all local references. There are no such personal greetings as are customary with St. Paul. Nothing is said about any local traditions of Church life, or of any external relations. There are also well-marked differences of language and style. There are a considerable number of words and expressions to be found nowhere else in St. Paul's writings. Sentences flow on into paragraphs with scarcely any break, and new themes or new aspects of the same themes

[1] G. Milligan, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 122-4.

suddenly suggest themselves to the author's mind with an almost complete absence of methodical arrangement. And, more than all that, no one who carefully reads the Epistle to the Ephesians can doubt that its doctrinal contents differ considerably from those of any one of St. Paul's earlier Epistles, or of all of them taken together.

2. These are considerable difficulties; and it is not surprising that St. Paul's authorship of this Epistle has been questioned by many competent scholars, and even by those who have been ready to acknowledge as his the great majority of the letters attributed to him.

Let us see what there is in favour of the Pauline authorship.

(1) In the first place, the historical evidence in favour of the Pauline authorship is very strong. We have the best reason for saying that by the end of the second century it was generally regarded as the work of St. Paul. There is evidence also that it was in circulation by the close of the first century or the beginning of the second. The place which it had then, and the use that was made of it, also indicate that it was recognized as more than an ordinary writing—that it was accepted, indeed, for what it professed to be. In short, in oldest antiquity there is nothing to show that the claim which it bore upon its face was questioned, or that it was assigned to any other writer than St. Paul.

(2) As to the lack of local references, there is a reason for that which we shall understand when we look at the question of whom the letter was addressed to. And as to the language and style of the Epistle, all that it is needful to say is that the style of any great writer shows wide variations according to his age and mood and subject. A writer may change his style and even vary his diction within very wide limits. Nothing, therefore, is more precarious than to draw a final conclusion either from mere verbal agreements or from verbal differences. Indeed, perhaps the presumption raised by differences of style and verbiage may be to the opposite effect. A careful, to say nothing of a consummate, imitator, who wished his work to pass for that of St. Paul, would take some care to model his thought, but especially his style and choice of words, upon the genuine writings of the Apostle with which he was familiar.

(3) More serious is the difference in its doctrine from that of the earlier Epistles. But it is obvious that a great theological teacher, such as St. Paul confessedly was, in writing to different Churches under different circumstances would naturally be led to lay stress on different parts of the sum total of his belief; so that at one time this, at one time that, doctrine or aspect of doctrine might be expected to fall into subordination or to be altogether unnoticed. And we have an additional assurance that it would be so in the fact that in the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul shows, to say the least, how catholic-minded he was, how little disposed to measure truth by a monotonous partisan standard. Moreover, if the Epistle to the Ephesians differs from the earlier Epistles of St. Paul, it is closely connected with the Epistle to the Colossians. All internal and external marks of Pauline authorship that belong to the Epistle to the Colossians must be held to strengthen the impression that this sister Epistle is by the same writer. Now the more closely we scrutinize those parts of both Epistles which most nearly resemble each other —scrutinize them comparatively and scrutinize them in their respective contexts—the less possible it becomes to find traces of a second-hand imitative character about the language of either. The stamp of freshness and originality is on both.

¶ 'To all the difficulties of authorship,' says Howson,[1] 'there is the one sweeping reply, that no one but St. Paul *could* have been the writer.' And the reply is as pertinent, from the literary point of view, as it is certainly sweeping. Who could have been the writer, the writer of this long-acknowledged masterpiece of thought and soul, if not St. Paul? It was a piece of authorship certainly old when Irenæus lived. So it must have been

[1] *Character of St. Paul*, 146, note.

produced within the first century, or only just outside it. Who then, between the Apostles and Irenæus, was this man who wrote it? It must have been a personage in whom were united at once a large versatility of expression, a great power of close and suggestive reasoning, a heart capable of conceiving and expounding on the one hand the most rapturous views of the glory of Christ, and on the other hand of enforcing the homeliest details of Christian morals (let us observe with the utmost attention *that* coincidence). And all this he possessed, on the hypothesis, along with a feeling for truth and honour so extremely low that he could set himself to construct his message under a false name, and to throw over it, or rather into it, the glamour of a personated experience and affection, with the apparent intention of an absolute and permanent concealment of himself, which, in effect, he has perfectly achieved. This would be an astonishing person at any age and in any region in the history of letters. But on the hypothesis, this rare being was found within the narrow and comparatively uncultured circles of the primitive Church.

III.

WHERE IT WAS WRITTEN.

It was from Rome that Paul wrote this Epistle to the church at Ephesus; he had been a prisoner there for about two years. He had reached his goal—a new centre of evangelization, which was also the centre of the world. Step by step the centre of Christian evangelization had passed toward Rome as its goal. From Jerusalem, which told unmistakably that 'salvation was of the Jews,' it had moved to Antioch, where in a Greek city Jew met Gentile on equal terms. From Antioch, under St. Paul's leadership, it had passed to Corinth and Ephesus. These were indeed thoroughly Gentile cities, and leading cities of the Empire, but they were provincial. No imperial movement could rest satisfied till it established itself at the centre of the great imperial organization—till it had reached Rome.

¶ Only in a few lines do I touch the subject of the personal surroundings of the writer as he composed the Epistle. And this will be enough; for in this matter we have little to do but to indulge an innocent pictorial liberty, that we may just touch our study of the Epistle with some local colour.

So we will call it a spring day in the year 63, when Favonius is beginning to breathe, and the seas to open, and Tychicus, who has been long at the Apostle's side, is preparing to travel from Italy to Asia. The place, we will say, is a floor, a flat, in some block of buildings near the great camp of Guards (*castra praetoriana*) outside the eastern wall of Rome. There is the 'hired lodging' of St. Paul. His window looks out over what is now the grey-green sea of the Campagna; it was then a landscape brilliant with white villas, and woods, and little towns. He sits to dictate; he is not able, as once, to move freely, to walk as he speaks, for that long chain of iron links fastens him day and night to the sentinel who is his enforced companion; sometimes no doubt a reckless, ribald, and most unwilling companion, but to-day, we will suppose, one of the many who assuredly learnt Christ from Paul in those hours of infinite opportunity. Observe the fast ageing Missionary: the small, slight frame is bent and battered; the eyes are dim, and troubled with disease; but there is an ethereal air in the arches of the brow, and a wonderful power and tenderness in the mobile lips. Yonder is Epaphras beside him; he has been talking again of Colossæ and the Lycus, and of the needs and dangers, as well as of the loving life, of the believers there. There on the other side is Tychicus, with the pen of reed and the strips of papyrus, ready to do the writer's part. Beside him lie two finished scrolls, the Letter to Colossæ and the Note to Philemon. The saints have worshipped. They are sure of the Lord, of His glory, and of His love. The Apostle knows that he has received his Gospel 'not from men, neither through man . . . but by the revelation of Jesus Christ' (Gal. i. 1, 12). And in the calm assurance of his commission, and of the eternal truth, he

dictates his letter to Ephesus for the missions of Asia.[1]

IV.

TO WHOM ADDRESSED?

To whom is the letter addressed? The letter itself tells us. 'To the saints which are at Ephesus.' But again there is a difficulty, and it is more serious this time. In the margin of the Revised Version we read that 'some very ancient authorities omit "*at Ephesus.*" ' More precisely, three of the most trustworthy manuscripts omit these words, and there is other ancient evidence against them. This external evidence, and the absence of personal references and of that tone of intimacy which so strongly characterizes all the letters of the Apostle to the churches with which he had laboured, has led many to conclude, probably rightly, that it was a circular letter addressed to a group of churches with most of which Paul had no personal acquaintance. The fact that the same messenger, Tychicus, accompanied both this letter and that to the Colossians, and is in both commended in almost identical words (Col. iv. 7, 8; Eph. vi. 21, 22), together with the strong similarity of the two letters in other respects, makes it practically certain that this letter was sent at the same time as the letter to Colossæ and the letter to Philemon. Indeed, it is more than possible that this is the letter referred to in Col. iv. 16, which the Colossians were to get from Laodicea and read.

1. In reading the letter one cannot but be struck with the fact that in several passages the Apostle speaks to his readers as to Christians personally unknown to him. Thus in chap. i. 15, he says to them that he has 'heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus' which is among them, and which they show toward all the saints. And in chap. iii. 2, he expresses himself thus: 'If so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward' (that is, his apostleship to the Gentiles). In chap. iv. 21, he writes: 'But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus.' Now Paul could never have written thus if he had been addressing the Church at Ephesus.

2. Of all St. Paul's letters it is the most general, the least personal. In this respect it more nearly resembles the Epistle to the Romans than any other. Both alike partake of the character rather of a formal treatise than of a familiar letter. Yet even the Epistle to the Romans betrays deeper personal feeling, and exhibits more distinct traces of individual relations and local colouring. In writing to the Ephesians of their faith and progress in the gospel, he might be expected at all events to allude to his own labours among them, their attachment to him, the memories and experiences which they shared in common. Far different is his language. 'Having *heard* of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, I cease not to give thanks for you.' 'For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles,—if so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward.' 'But ye did not so learn Christ, if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus.' All this is general and comprehensive, not necessarily excluding personal intercourse with those he addresses, but still scarcely natural if addressed to his own converts solely. It is strangely at variance with the language in which he generally writes to his own children in the faith, the Corinthians and Philippians, for instance. It even presents a very striking contrast to the contemporaneous letter to the Colossians, for whom he shows an intense personal interest, and to whose special dangers and temptations he is fully alive, though they had not seen his face in the flesh.

3. Now, if it was a circular letter, to be read by several different churches, a vacant space would be left in the original copy after the words 'To the saints that are.' In the

[1] H. C. G. Moule, *Grace and Godliness*, 69.

copies made for distribution the blank would be filled in with the names of the individual Churches for which they were intended, 'in Ephesus,' 'in Smyrna,' 'in Laodicea,' 'in Thyatira,' and so forth.

4. It is not difficult to see how the idea became general that the letter was sent to Ephesus alone. Ephesus was the Metropolis of the Province of Asia, both ecclesiastically and politically. Through Ephesus lay the road on which the Asiatic Churches communicated, chiefly at least, with those of other lands. Thus this Epistle would pass to all churches (in Asia Minor) from Ephesus.

Ephesus was a rich and splendid city. It was the capital of the great Roman province of Asia. It had an extensive commerce. When the fertile countries of Asia Minor, now impoverished by the government of the Turk, were wealthiest, Ephesus was all that Smyrna now is to the diminished trade of the Levant. The importance of Ephesus, however, in ancient times was not due to its commercial position alone. It had a considerable name as a school of art. The great painters, Parrhasius of the fifth century B.C. and Apelles of the fourth belonged to the city. Above all, it was a place of paramount interest. It was the centre of the worship of the goddess who was known among the Greeks as Artemis and among the Romans as Diana. The temple erected in her honour was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, a splendid structure of shining marble, stated by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.*, xvi. 40, 213) to have been 425 feet long and 220 wide (but by Mr. J. T. Wood to have measured 343 feet by 164), with 127 columns some 60 feet high. It is reported to have taken about 220 years to finish. In it was treasured an image of the goddess which was believed to have fallen from heaven in remote times. Behind the shrine was the 'treasury,' which was the bank of Asia. The temple was destroyed by the Goths in A.D. 262.

St. Paul knew the city well. As he was returning to Syria from Greece on his second missionary journey he called there with Aquila and Priscilla, stayed a few days, discussed the claims of the Lord Jesus in the synagogue, and promised to return. On his third missionary journey, after visiting the churches in the interior of Asia Minor, he came down to the coast and remained in Ephesus and its neighbourhood for two or three years. For three months he went week after week to the synagogue, speaking boldly and reasoning with the Jews 'concerning the kingdom of God.' Then he separated his converts from the Jewish congregation and hired the school, the lecture hall, of Tyrannus, who was probably a Greek lecturer on rhetoric and philosophy. There he was able to meet day after day with all who cared to listen to his exposition and defence of the Christian gospel. His teaching seems to have made a great impression on the city, and at last provoked the alarm of the trades that depended on the reverence for Diana. There was a violent popular tumult, and Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia and Greece. On his way back from Greece to Jerusalem he called at Miletus, which was twenty or thirty miles from Ephesus, and sent a message to the elders of the Ephesian church to meet him; the pathetic address which he delivered to them has been preserved by Luke, and is contained in the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

V.

THE CONTENTS OF THE LETTER.

And now, before proceeding to the detailed exposition of the Epistle, can we obtain a clear idea of its contents? Two Epistles—the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle to the Ephesians—stand out from the rest of St. Paul's Epistles by the vastness of their survey of Christian truth and life. There is, however, a distinction between them. The Epistle to the Romans is a systematic exposition; the Epistle to the Ephesians is rather an expatiation. It resembles a great musical composition in the treatment of its theme. Fresh movements enter at every paragraph, developing the meaning of the great theme, which recurs again and again with an insist-

ence that is combined with endless variety and is enriched by every element that has been added. Or the Epistle may be compared to a river that is continually fed by new tributaries, so that it flows with ever-increasing depth and breadth into the ocean of infinity. Its central theme is that of the great catholic society, the renovated Israel, the Church of God. In this catholic brotherhood St. Paul sees the realization of an age-long purpose of God, the fulfilment of a long-secret counsel, now at last disclosed to His chosen prophets. He sees nothing incongruous in finding in the yet young and limited societies of Christian disciples the consummation of the Divine purpose for the world; for these societies represent the breaking down of all barriers and the bringing of all men to unity with one another through a recovered unity with God, through Christ and in His Spirit. Therefore the work which the Church is to accomplish is nothing less than a universal work, a work not even limited to humanity; it is the bringing back of all things visible or invisible into that unity which lies in God's original purpose of creation. St. Paul long ago had spoken to the Corinthians of a spiritual wisdom which they were not yet ready to listen to. But now St. Paul seems to feel that the time has come when all the depth and richness of the Divine secret may be spoken out.

¶ We claim for Ephesians nothing less than what Marcus Dods claimed for the Gospel according to John: 'It is a perfect work of art; from the first word to the last there is no paragraph, sentence, or expression which is out of its place, or with which we could dispense; part hangs together with part in perfect balance.' The flow of its sublime eloquence sweeps forward along the channel of logical arrangement and argument. The student does not have to try to arrange the contents according to any logical and orderly scheme. It is not left to the student to adopt any plan or to put ideas under any one head. Paul has cared for all these things himself. The Epistle itself is a logical whole, a literary unit. When the student has discovered the true organism of the Epistle, he will see every part dove-tailing beautifully into every other part. In the perfection of its form as well as in the heavenliness of its matter he will see an evidence of its inspiration.[1]

¶ The topic of the Epistle to the Ephesians is of pre-eminent interest in the present day. At no former period has there been so widespread a recognition in all departments of human life of the need of combination and co-operation; and never, perhaps, has more anxious thought been expended on the problem of the ultimate destiny of mankind. Whilst it is true that everywhere and always questions have been asked about the future, yet it is not too much to say that we, who have begun to feel after the truth of a corporate life as higher than an individual life, are more eager than any past generation has been to learn, and perhaps are more capable of learning, what is the goal for which Man as a whole is making, or, in other words, what is God's Purpose for the Human Race.[2]

¶ Renan may presume to call the Epistle *une épître banale*, a third-rate composition. The criticism, read in the light first of the Epistle itself, then of the verdict of all Christendom, can only convict the subtle literary critic of a spiritual paralysis which fatally affects even literary insight where the theme is spiritual. A greater than Renan, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, subtlest of critics, and at the same time both philosopher and Christian, in a single brief sentence pronounces the Epistle to be 'one of the divinest compositions of man.' A true testimony, yet after all how inadequate! 'A divine composition of man' is a phrase perfectly justifiable in theory, as used of a book of Scripture. Yet it rings somewhat out of tune; for the words might be used to describe a work of sanctified genius which yet made no pretence to be an oracle of God; and if there is a writing which implicitly claims to be that or nothing, it is the Epistle to the Ephesians. But Coleridge meant the phrase soundly, and we may take it so, as one witness among many to that supreme quality

[1] E. C. Caldwell, in *The Princeton Theological Review*, xvi. 379.

[2] J. A. Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 14.

in the Epistle which is an evidence to its origin weightier than even all the quotations of the Fathers. We have in it the *ipsissima verba* of the Chosen Vessel. We receive it, delivered at our doors, as a Letter about Christ's glory from the man whom He expressly moulded, conquered, and commissioned, to tell us of Himself and His salvation.[1]

The Salutation.

Eph. i. 1, 2.—'Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.'

THE Salutation brings before us: (1) the Writer of the Letter; (2) the Readers; and (3) the Blessing.

1. *The Writer.*—The writer of the letter is St. Paul. Is this, then, that fierce enemy of Jesus, who kept the garments of the men who stoned Stephen? Is this he who, having witnessed the more than human meekness of the first martyr, and having heard him with his last breath pray for his murderers, continued to breathe out 'threatenings and slaughters against the disciples of the Lord'? Yes, and no. It is he; and yet it is not. He is become another man. He was a Pharisee of the straitest sect; but no trace of his sect remains in him, and not much of the Jew. The Pharisee is dead, the Jew supplanted; and the universal humanity of the Lord Jesus is quickened and built up in him. In mind, in heart, in character and in purpose, he is a new man; and all things are new to him. God is new to him. The Scriptures are new to him. The future is new to him. And he has altogether a new interest in men. It has been made known to him that Jesus, whom he persecuted, is only another name for The Universal Truth, the Son of God, the Maker of heaven and earth. He perceives, therefore, that 'every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth,' to the Name of Jesus, and that 'every tongue' will have to 'confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

[1] H. C. G. Moule, *Ephesian Studies*, 15.

¶ Among modern discoveries which have brought men and nations into closer communion must be placed the telephone, by means of which you can hear the voice of your friend who is separated from you by many miles. You place your ear against the receiver and you hear the voice speaking plainly to you over oceans, countries and continents. Metaphorically speaking, if we place our ears against these Epistles we can hear the voice of St. Paul speaking over nineteen centuries to the present day saints. We consider a man great who is twenty years before his time. In one sense St. Paul was twenty centuries before his time; so . . . it will be well for the saints to listen to some word of advice from the Apostle of the Gentiles. But before we listen for the message, we must ask: Who is this man, this Apostle, who dares to speak to the present day? The force of a statement depends not on its contents, but on the person who makes it. The power of a message is found, not in its contents, but in the personality that is behind it. If a tent-maker who lived in Tarsus centuries ago sends a message to the Western peoples of the twentieth century, we want to know by what authority he speaks. Ought we to listen to this man's message? Without minimizing the greatness of other men, we must place St. Paul as the greatest figure—with the exception of Jesus Christ—in the annals of history. He was a man who would be great in any age and successful in any sphere. There are some men who become great by attaching themselves to some noble movement at the psychological moment. I do not think that we should have ever heard of the Apostle Peter if he had not had the good fortune to be chosen as one of the Twelve. It was Christianity that made Peter great, and handed his name down to us. But St. Paul, quite apart from his Christian apostleship, would have been heard of as one of the makers of history. Saul of Tarsus would have been known in history even if he had never become Paul the Apostle.[1]

[1] J. W. Jones.

(1) The writer is 'an apostle of Christ Jesus.' It is well known that this word is used in two senses—a narrower sense, in which it was applied by our Lord Himself to the Twelve (Luke vi. 13; Mark iii. 14 v. 1), and a wider, in which it includes certainly Barnabas (Acts xiv. 4, 14) and probably James, the Lord's brother (Gal. i. 19), Andronicus and Junias (Rom. xvi. 7), and many others. Strictly speaking, St. Paul could claim to be an Apostle only in the wider acceptation of the term; he lays stress, however, justly on the fact that he is an Apostle not merely by virtue of possessing such qualifications as are described in Acts i. 21, 22, but through a direct intervention of Christ. At the same time it should be remembered that St. Paul lays stress on this fact not with a view to personal aggrandizement, but only with a view to commend his gospel with the weight which he knows it deserves.

(2) The writer further describes himself as 'an apostle of Jesus Christ *through the will of God.*' He was not appointed to his office through the intervention of the Church, or of those who had been apostles before him; his call came direct from Heaven. Much less had he dared to undertake his great work at the impulse of his own zeal for the honour of Christ and the redemption of men. To the last he thought of himself as 'less than the least of all saints,' and had he chosen his own place it would have been among the obscurest of those who trusted in Christ for the pardon of sin and for eternal life. He had been 'a blasphemer and persecutor'; he was 'the chief of sinners'; he was 'not meet to be called an apostle,' because he 'persecuted the church of God.'

When he describes himself as an apostle 'through the will of God' he means that he felt that the Divine will was in immediate contact with him, was the strong yet gracious force which placed him in the apostleship, and which sustained him in all his apostolic labours and sufferings. He attributed nothing to the vigour of his faith, to the passion of his gratitude for the Divine goodness, to the completeness of his self-consecration to Christ's service; he was living and acting under the control of forces which had their origin beyond and above himself; his apostolic work was the effect and expression of a Divine volition.

¶ This is the ground of confidence and authority of every Christian worker, that he is an apostle by direct vocation—the call of Jesus Christ has made him such. He holds his commission not by human arrangement but as a part of the Divine purpose. The deepest consciousness of his soul is that Christ who saved him has sent him out as His servant. Such a man will, like Paul, be at once self-depreciative and self-assertive. For he is always conscious of his own weakness and unworthiness; and, at the same time, is always conscious of his authority as Christ's ambassador. These are not contradictory characteristics but rather complementary. For the one who comes into intimate and redeeming contact with the Lord Christ will always realize within himself a growing apprehension of his limitations and shortcomings; but he will likewise always realize the wonderful inspiration of Christ's trust in forgiven men.

Further ground for confidence is in the fact that his apostolic call is 'by the will of God.' Sure of this fact, he is secure from all evil and undaunted by all the difficulties of the work. The might of God is always the protection of His messenger. Nothing can by any means harm him while he makes it the supreme business of life to fulfil that holy Will to which he has surrendered himself. And daily the approval of God lifts those who sincerely serve Him above all care of the disapproval of others. In many a dark hour, when the visible results of service are disappointing, and when to the depressed soul comes the subtle suggestion of the enemy that it has been a mistake to launch out on such a profitless and fruitless life, it is the saving strength of His anointed.[1]

2. *The Readers.*—The Epistle is sent to 'saints.'

(1) Now, in the early days all Christians were 'saints.' The title did not attribute any

[1] J. S. Holden, *Chapter by Chapter*, iv. 209.

personal merit to them; it simply recalled their prerogatives and their obligations. Whenever they were so described they were reminded that God had made them His own. They were 'holy' because they belonged to Him. According to Paul's conception, every Christian man was a temple, a sacrifice, a priest; his whole life was a sabbath; he belonged to an elect race; he was the subject of an invisible and Divine kingdom; he was a 'saint.'

In God's church there is no aristocracy of sanctity, nor does the name of saint belong only to those who live high above the ordinary tumults of life and the secularities of daily duty. A man may be as true a saint in a factory—ay! and a far truer one—than in a hermitage. We do not need to cultivate a mediæval or Roman Catholic type of ascetic piety in order to be called saints. We do not need to be among the select few to whom it is given here upon earth, but not given without their own effort, to rise to the highest summits of holy conformity with the Divine will. But down among all the troubles and difficulties and engrossing occupations of our secular work, we may be living saintly lives. For the one condition of being holy is that we should know whose we are and whom we serve, and we can carry the consciousness of belonging to Him into every corner of the poorest, most crowded, and most distracted life. The saint is the man who says, 'O Lord, truly I am thy servant . . . thou hast loosed my bonds.' Because He has loosed my bonds, the bonds that held me to my sins, He has therein fastened me with far more stringent bonds of love to the sweet and free service of His redeeming love. All His children are His saints.

¶ All Christians must be saints; and, if they come not under that character on earth, they will never be saints in glory.[1]

(2) Those whom he describes as 'saints' he also describes as 'the faithful in Christ Jesus.' Scholars are divided as to whether Paul means that they have *faith* or whether he means that they have *fidelity*. The word which he uses may stand as well for the one idea as for the other. Had he been asked in which sense he employed it, he might have answered that faith carries fidelity with it. For to Paul faith was very much more than intellectual belief; it was an act in which the intellect, the heart, the conscience, and the will acknowledged Christ as the Redeemer and the Ruler of men. As long as faith of this kind exists in a man, Christ has sovereignty over his life; and the man's faith guarantees his fidelity.

So, then, here is Paul's notion—and it is not only Paul's notion, it is God's truth—that the only way by which a man ever comes to realize that he belongs to God, and to yield himself in glad surrender to His uses, and so to become pure and holy like Him whom He loves and aspires to, is by humble faith in Jesus Christ. If we want to talk in theological terminology, sanctification follows upon faith. It is when we believe and trust in Jesus Christ that all the great motives begin to tell upon life and heart, the motives which deliver us from our selfishness, which bind us to God, which make it a joy to do anything for His service, which kindle in our hearts the flame of fructifying and consecrating and transforming love. Faith, the simple reliance of a trusting heart upon Jesus Christ for all that it needs, is the foundation of the loftiest elevation and attainment of the Christian character. We begin with it as a foundation that we may set the shining topstone of 'Holiness to the Lord' upon the heaven-pointing summit of our lives.

¶ Many serious-minded men take an infinitude of pains to produce a true holiness for themselves out of their own corrupt hearts; squeezing, all the time, oil out of a flint. Whereas, the true way, and the only possible way, for them to get the mastery over the indwelling sin is by receiving into their hearts a new spiritual nature out of the fulness of that new spiritual nature that is in Christ.[1]

(3) It is fidelity to, or faith *in Christ*. The New Testament speaks in diverse ways about the relation between the believing soul and Jesus Christ. It sometimes speaks of faith

[1] Matthew Henry.

[1] G. F. Barbour, *The Life of Alexander Whyte*, 306.

as being *towards* Him, and that suggests the going out of a hand that, as it were, stretches towards what it would lay hold of. It sometimes speaks of faith as being *on* Him, which suggests the idea of a building on its foundation, or a hand leaning on a support. And it sometimes speaks, as here, of faith being *in* Him, which suggests the folded wings of the dove that has found its nest, the repose of faith, the quiet rest in the Lord, the 'waiting patiently for Him.' Such trust so directed is the one condition of such tranquillity.

'I know not hope, nor dread,'
The sodden woodland said,
'No dumb, delicious joys; no fears
Encompass me with smiles and tears.
I wait. The arum's close-shut hood
Must open, for her time is set.
I love her loveliness, and yet,
I would not hasten, if I could,
The coming of the violet.
Nor tear the chalices apart
That hide the bluebell's faithful heart.

One, mightier than I, decrees
That cold and heat shall never cease.
I owe Him fealty, and so,
It is enough for me to know,
That in the fulness of the time
All things must ripen to their prime.
What need for me to hope or dread?'
The sodden woodland wisely said.[1]

3. *The Blessing.*—When our Lord sent out His twelve Apostles on an evangelistic journey during His own ministry, He said to them: 'Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy: and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.' The customary Jewish salutation, 'Peace be with this house,' when spoken by the apostles of Christ, was to be made real and effective by the concurrence of the Divine grace. It was really to bring peace to those whose hearts were simple, trustful and devout; the words of benediction were to be confirmed and fulfilled by God.

Paul had equal authority to speak in God's name. To those in the Ephesian church who were really 'saints,' and who were really 'faithful in Christ Jesus,' he says, 'Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.' And these words belong to too lofty a region to be regarded as merely an expression of courtesy and goodwill. They are not a prayer, for they are not addressed to God but to men; and yet they are very much more than a wish. We must call them a Benediction or Blessing.

For the salutation of such an one as St. Paul is not in word only. He is not a mere messenger of Christ, but a medium. We must assuredly believe that whenever Paul wrote: 'Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ,' there was an actual outgoing of grace and peace from God, through him. No one can live in God without being a channel for God. The vessel that receives its supply from an exhaustless source must overflow. Our Lord, who spake no vain words, declared of His true disciple, that 'rivers of living water' should flow out from him. These living streams of grace and peace can never be lost. They may be rejected by those whom we desire to bless; but in that case, our Lord says, they return to us again. What we give we have. The river of life which flows, and flows evermore, from God, having completed its circuit, returns to God again.

The Saints at——?

Eph. i. 1.—'Paul . . . to the saints which are at ———'.

'Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus.' 'To the saints which are at Ephesus'—who would they be? Where would the post-runner find them? If Paul had sent a letter to London, Edinburgh, Dublin with this address—

[1] Fay Inchfawn, *Homely Verses of a Home-Lover*, 98.

'To the saints which are in Edinburgh'—who would claim it?

Not we. Certainly not. We do not lay claim to so much goodness as that. We will let no one challenge our moral life. But we do not quite set up to be saints. Wordsworth's ideal woman—

> A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food—

is enough for us. To the saints? No saints in Edinburgh, try elsewhere.

But we are making a mistake. That is not what 'saint' means. It has no reference to goodness, much or little. We refuse the letter addressed to the saints because we are not good enough. But Paul did not call the company in Ephesus who received the letter 'saints' because they were good. In point of fact they were not good, not so good, it is to be hoped, as we are. And yet he had no hesitation in calling them saints.

There are three words which we have to understand. 'Saints' is one of them. The other two are 'sinners' and 'righteous.' When Jesus began His ministry He found the people divided into 'the sinners' and 'the righteous.' The sinners knew that they were wrong. The righteous believed that they were right. Jesus showed the righteous that they also were wrong. He accepted what they did for what it was worth, but it was not worth much. They were trying to do right without being right.

Now when Jesus dealt with these two classes, He dealt with them both alike. To both He said that they must begin again. In the case of the sinners that was comparatively easy, for all that they had to do was to repent of their sinfulness. In the case of the righteous it was very difficult. For them also, however, there was nothing else for it; they must begin again. They must get right with God first. Then they would be able to do right.

How were they to get right with God? Jesus explained very simply, Paul very elaborately. Jesus said, 'Follow me.' He was at one with God. 'I and the Father are one.' 'I do always that which pleases him.' To be at one with Jesus was to be at one with God. He called this oneness Love. 'If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him.' To be right with God was to love the Lord Jesus Christ.

So said Paul also. But he had a most elaborate story to tell of the way by which a man is brought to love the Lord. It is the story of the at-one-ment. As soon as we use the word we spell it with a capital letter and are occupied with the doctrine of the Atonement. And why not? This *is* the way of becoming right with God. Jesus *has* to die on the Cross. We have to die with Him. Jesus has to rise again from the dead. We have to rise in Him. It is elaborate, but it is all true and verifiable in experience. Paul has not gone one step astray from the Master. His 'I am crucified with Christ' is just the theology of 'Come, take up your cross, and follow me.'

What are we to call men when they follow? We need a new name. 'The sinners' will not do. 'The righteous' will not do. We shall call them 'the saints'; that is, the holy ones. It is a good name, for the point of it is that they are one with God, who is the Holy One.

Yes, the saints are those who are right with God. They are not those who have done right. They may not yet have done one truly right thing. In any case, it is not because they have done right that they are called saints. It is because they *are* right.

How Paul insists upon it! He insists upon it so determinedly that we have had to coin a word to distinguish the fact of being right from the fact of doing right. The one we have called Justification, the other Sanctification. And no one can read the Pauline Epistles—no scholar does read them now—without perceiving that when Paul says a man is justified he does not mean that he is doing right, he means that he *is* right.

Now it is possible for a man to be called a saint though he is not a saint. How are we to know that a man is right with God? By his deeds. If he is right, he will do right. Justification is not sanctification; but if justi-

fication is not followed by sanctification, it is not justification. What is the difference, then, between the righteous and the saints? How can we tell that the righteous are not saints, and the saints not simply righteous?

Christina Rossetti will tell us:

I saw a Saint.—How canst thou tell that he
Thou sawest was a Saint?—
I saw one like to Christ so luminously
By patient deeds of love, his mortal taint
Seemed made his groundwork for humility.

And when he marked me downcast utterly
Where foul I sat and faint,
Then more than ever Christ-like kindled he;
And welcomed me as I had been a saint,
Tenderly stooping low to comfort me.

Christ bade him, 'Do thou likewise.' Wherefore he
Waxed zealous to acquaint
His soul with sin and sorrow, if so be
He might retrieve some latent saint:—
'Lo, I, with the child God hath given to me!'

Two things are characteristic of the saint, two classes of deeds—likeness to Christ (who went about doing good), and the discovery of other saints. The 'righteous' are never luminously like Christ, and they have no skill in the discovery of saints. Christina Rossetti might have been expounding the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The elder brother was most unlike the father, and he had no eyes for the saintship—the latent saintship—of his younger brother.

Still it must be admitted that it is not always easy, and perhaps it is not always possible, for men, to distinguish the saints from the righteous. It may be that the tares will remain among the wheat undetected even by the servants of the Husbandman. It may be that this one and that will enter into the marriage feast without the wedding-garment. But the detection is at the last inevitable. 'Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment?' And he was speechless. His good deeds had been the doing of his duty. Until this moment he expected the credit due to them. But now he is speechless. 'Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few chosen.'[1]

Grace and Peace.

Eph. i. 2.—'Grace be to you and peace.'

This is the usual form which the opening Salutation takes in the Epistles of the New Testament. So it is in Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Peter, as also in Revelation, i. 4.

Called the Apostolic Salutation, it is composed of old words which Christian experience made new. In fact, it clasped together and united in one the familiar greetings of Greek and Jew, or, to take a wider view, the familiar greetings of the Eastern and Western worlds. When Greek or Roman saluted each other, they used the word 'grace' or its equivalent. 'Grace be unto you,' they said. It stood for our 'Good day,' 'God be with you,' or 'Farewell.' It was the European greeting. The word 'peace' served the same purpose among the Jews and nearly all Eastern races. When they met in synagogue, temple, or street, this was their sign of friendship or welcome—'Peace be unto you.' It was one of the marks which distinguished Jew from Gentile. And now by a happy thought the two were combined in one larger and sweeter Christian greeting, just as Jew and Greek, East and West were made one in Christ. 'Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.'

1. By 'grace' the Greeks meant beauty. They lived in a land of beauty. They worshipped beauty. They tried to make everything about them beautiful. They hated everything that was unsightly and ugly far more than we do; and when they said 'Grace

[1] J. Hastings, in *The Expository Times*, xxxi. 436.

be unto you,' it meant, 'May you have beauty of person and beauty of soul. May your houses and children, and all your surroundings be fair to the eyes. May your lives be like a noble poem or statue, with no discord or deformity to mar them.' It was the word which an artistic people loved—Grace!

2. The Jew was more anxious about security. His little land was girt by enemies. It had often been wasted by the sword. War was always hanging like a storm-cloud on its borders. It had never enjoyed a long spell of rest. When a Jew said 'Peace be unto you,' he voiced the desire of every heart. It meant a condition in which there would be no foes to molest, no strife and war impoverishing the land, no pestilence, plague, drought, or famine—a condition in which everyone would be able to pursue his labours unhindered, with none to make him afraid. He had a vision of smiling fields, favouring seasons, golden harvests, and comfort and plenty for all. And this vision found expression in the greeting, 'Peace be unto you.'

3. The Christian salutation preserved both these thoughts; but it raised, enlarged, sanctified them, and gave them a more spiritual significance.

(1) The New Testament word 'grace' means essentially what the Greeks meant by it—beauty, but beauty of a Diviner kind. To the Christian soul there were two things supremely beautiful. One was the infinite kindness of our Heavenly Father, the stooping condescension of His love and pity, which bestowed gifts upon His undeserving children and showered mercies and compassions and forgiveness, which was gentle and long-suffering, patient and motherly, and which gave His best gift, Jesus, to be their Sacrifice, Saviour, and Eternal Hope. That was grace unspeakable—the beauty which exceeded all human thought. And the other supremely beautiful thing was the Lord Jesus Himself, that wonderful combination of Divine and human perfections. The grace of the Lord Jesus—how winsome it was, how attractive! What complete harmony in all its parts! What poetry in every touch and glance! What music in every word! How faultless was it in all its mingled strength and tenderness, its wisdom and purity, its tearful pity and abounding forgiveness, its unsullied holiness and majestic patience. The grace of God and the grace of Jesus Christ, His well-beloved Son. There was no other beauty in the world present or the world to come which could be compared with that. And when St. Paul said 'Grace be to you,' it was a wish and prayer that every saint might have an ample share in these two beautiful things: that God's kindness might still and for ever enrich him with gifts and mercies, and that the incomparable qualities of Jesus Christ might become his permanent possession and adornment.

(2) In like manner, the peace greeting was lifted up and interpreted in the light of Jesus' face. The Jew had thought of peace as a state of happiness produced by outward quiet. It was the happiness of undisturbed prosperity and abounding material good, every man sitting under his own vine and fig tree, rejoicing in his home and children, and nothing to make him afraid. Christ had not interpreted peace in that way. He had not spoken of it in that sense or enjoyed it in that kind. The men who had been with Him had heard the word upon His lips countless times. It had been His daily benediction to them. They had seen that He carried peace within Him through the most stormy and threatening scenes; on wild, tempestuous seas, amid warring elements and the wrath of men, in poverty and want, hunger and thirst, toil and weariness, in loneliness and rejection, when His sky was dark, when the world was cruel, when friends proved false, when the Cross faced Him, when all things were contrary. Ever had He found perfect peace in the thought that the Father was with Him, that the friendship and love of the Eternal One were His sure defence and support, and that the mighty power which laughed at the rage of men was working on His side and making all things bend to the fulfilment of the eternal promises. It was a peace which this world had never

known, felt, or imagined before; a peace which passed all understanding, deep as the ocean, immovable as a mountain, absolutely untouched by outward disturbances and alarms, unruffled by fear of loss, or pain, or death, rich in joy and hope, and unchanging as the very throne of God. That was the new, grand thought of peace which Jesus had given to His Church and the world—a peace which had nothing to do with external things, a peace which prosperity could not give or adversity take away, which was independent of this world's favours and propitious fortune, equally independent of hostile forces and human caprices, which settled down upon those who walked trustfully in the love-light of God and never left them. And when the faithful passed the greeting one to another, 'Peace be unto you,' it was a prayer that everyone might have in his own breast that noble calm, that sublime, fearless trust, that abounding confidence and hopefulness in all dark hours which had filled the life of the Son of God with granite strength and rivers of joy.[1]

The peace He giveth—none can take away;
It wraps us round in sweet and holy calm,
To wounded spirit proves a healing balm,
Oh grant us this sweet peace from day to day.

The storms that beat around can ne'er alarm,
Since Jesus' gentle voice says, 'Peace, be still!'
Hush'd are the winds and waves—His sov'reign will
Controls the tempest and protects from harm.

'Not as the world gives, do I give to thee,
No counterfeit base coin, but purest gold,
My peace endureth, never waxeth old,
The heart shall know it which is stay'd on Me.'

Then after life's long struggle, when we cease
To toil with work-worn hands and weary brain,
We pilgrims rest at last beyond earth's pain
In that sweet Upper Chamber, callèd Peace.[1]

[1] J. G. Greenhough, *Looking Backward and Looking Forward*, 9ff.

What is Christianity?

Eph. i. 3.—'All spiritual blessings (RV 'every spiritual blessing') in the heavenly places in Christ.'

Speaking in London, near the end of the nineteenth century, Hugh Price Hughes said: 'The great task of the twentieth century will be to separate Essential Christianity from the incrustations which have grown all over it during the last nineteen centuries. As a ship is put into dock in order to have its keel cleansed from the barnacles which have accumulated over it, greatly impeding its progress, so must Christianity be cleansed from all sorts of additions which well-meaning but unauthorized men have made to the religion of Jesus Christ and His apostles.'

He found Essential Christianity in this text.

1. The blessing which God our Father gives us, and for which St. Paul is so ecstatically grateful, is a 'spiritual blessing.' Life involves capacity, capacity craves satisfaction, and that which satisfies is a 'blessing.' Human life is, roughly speaking, threefold—bodily, mental, and spiritual. We have bodily needs; we crave food, warmth, light, and rest. We have mental needs; we crave the true, and the beautiful. We have also spiritual needs; we crave peace of conscience, and the good. The satisfaction of our bodily needs gives us pleasure. The satisfaction of our mental needs gives us happiness. The satisfaction of our spiritual needs gives us bliss.

The fatal delusion of the grosser forms of modern Socialism is the notion that if men have plenty to eat and to drink, and ample time for mental and physical enjoyment, they

[1] Una, *In Life's Garden*, 84.

need nothing more. Why, that is the ideal of a mere animal! When we demonstrate that these things are not the be-all and end-all of existence we are in danger of being suspected of indifference to the legitimate aspirations of the poor. But is it not true that when we have done our utmost to create happy social environments, and to satisfy the physical and mental needs of men, the questions which Macbeth asked of his wife's physician, still remain :—

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?

The greatest need of the world to-day is adequate spiritual blessing. That is to say, that, beneath and beyond all external, visible social remedies, what the world is groaning and dying for is some adequate cleansing and rededication of its inmost moral and spiritual nature. What it requires is that the fountains of our life should be purified; that at the centre there should be the working, not of selfishness, not of irreligion, but of harmonious love and obedience toward God and good-will toward all men. Our social problems, the world's great maladies, would yield if our spiritual nature were transformed and rededicated.

2. The distinctive blessing of Christianity is neither health of body nor culture of mind, but peace of conscience, a peace so peculiarly peaceful that it differentiates the Christian religion from every other. No Buddhist, no Hindu, no Confucianist, no Mohammedan, no Agnostic experiences 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.' That is the peculiar benediction of Christianity.

¶ Reading Mrs. Besant's Autobiography we are struck by the significant confession that, even during the years of her most bitter, dogmatic, and unhesitating Agnosticism, she was always conscious of a certain dissatisfaction in her own soul. Amid the intense and astonishing activity of her life, writing incessantly and preaching Agnosticism everywhere, she never realized that deep and immovable peace which is the heritage of every true Christian. To quote her own words—

'Ever more and more had been growing on me the feeling that something more than I had was needed for the cure of social ills. The Socialist position sufficed on the economic side, but where to gain the inspiration, the motive which should lead to the realization of the Brotherhood of Man? Our efforts to really organize bands of unselfish workers had failed. Much indeed had been done, but there was not a real movement of self-sacrificing devotion, in which men worked for Love's sake only, and asked but to give, not to take. Where was the material for the nobler Social Order, where the hewn stones for the building of the Temple of Man? A great despair would oppress me as I sought for such a movement and found it not.' [1]

3. Every spiritual blessing is enjoyed 'in the heavenly places.' That is to say, our mental horizon constantly expands beyond the limits of time and space. We become citizens of heaven, fellow citizens with angels and the sainted dead, friends of Jesus, children of God. This life is no longer the be-all and the end-all of our existence.

There is, of course, a root of truth in that 'other-worldliness' which Leigh Hunt and George Eliot properly condemned. The best religious teachers of our time are quite alive to the unbalanced teaching of the past. Many excellent Christians were, it is confessed, so preoccupied with another world that they neglected their present practical duties in this.

But the time has come for us to beware of the opposite extreme. This world is apt, as Wordsworth says, to be 'too much with us.' We are in constant danger of exaggerating the importance of 'the things which are seen and temporal'; and of overlooking the immeasur-

[1] *Annie Besant: an Autobiography*, 338.

ably greater importance of the things which, although 'unseen,' exist and are 'eternal.' This leads us to exaggerate grossly the evil of pain and the importance of material circumstances. It is time to remind one another that 'it is appointed unto men once to die' (Heb. ix. 27), and that this life is only the first chapter in our history, the threshold of an endless existence.

When we regard the present and the future from the heavenly places we cease to worry about trifles and to clutch at baubles. We are patient, hopeful, confident. All things are ours, all things are working together for good. Christ never forgot the future. He never left heaven out of account. That larger view reduced the menacing forms of evil to their relative insignificance, and He was able to preserve the unruffled serenity of His soul. Man created in the image of God, and redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, is too great to be limited to this narrow sphere and this brief life.

¶ As Ithaca was too small to satisfy the heroic soul of Ulysses, who pined even in his old age for wider spheres and more romantic enterprises, so does the emancipated soul of man resent the inevitable narrowness of our mortal lot, and aspire to that other wider, richer life which is our eternal heritage.[1]

4. But the most characteristic mark of Christianity is that every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places is ours *in Christ*. We receive it, we enjoy it, only so far as we are united to Christ as the branch is united to the vine, and as the arm is united to the body.

¶ Sir Monier Williams, one of our greatest authorities on Oriential religions, declares that this is the doctrine of Christianity which differentiates it from every other religion. No Chinaman imagines for a moment that there is any vital union between himself and Confucius. No Buddhist dreams of such organic fellowship with Buddha. No Mohammedan would say, 'I live; yet not I, but Mohammed liveth in me.' But St. Paul does say, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' And when he says that he means it to be taken literally, as a psychological fact, and not as a mere metaphor or figure of speech.[1]

Here we enter upon 'the deep things of God.' Here we stand face to face with what St. Paul truly calls the 'mystery of the gospel.' Yet this mystery, which the thoughtless and the superficial would regard as a metaphysical speculation, has had again and again a tremendous practical effect.

Take General Gordon. He was not a dreamy recluse, or a helpless metaphysician. Yet one of his three favourite books was 'Christ Mystical, or the blessed Union of Christ and His Members,' by Bishop Hall; and one who knew him intimately says that his view of the union between Christ and His members was the supreme influence in moulding his character and conduct. General Gordon was the hero he was because he realized his living union with Christ.

The permanent and continually repeated sacrament of the Christian Faith is intended to emphasize and accentuate this central truth. We never eat the bread and drink the wine of the Holy Communion without being reminded that he who does not eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus Christ has no life in him (John vi. 53); that as the bread and wine are incorporated with our bodies, so are we to feed upon Christ in our hearts by faith, in order that we may be incorporated with Him and He with us, and that we may continue to enjoy a vital union with Him.

But when the Bread is broken, wine outpoured,
The dear Lord
Breaks with His wounded Hands the prison-bar
Runs to my eager heart that swings ajar
To that sweet homing:
Then at His coming
He wraps my life in His, and His in mine,
Turns all my human dark to light divine.[2]

[1] H. Price Hughes, *Essential Christianity*, 14.

[1] H. Price Hughes, *Essential Christianity*, 13.
[2] H. L. Hubbard, *The Dreamland of Realtiy*, 37.

Prayer as Power.

Eph. i. 3.—'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.'

If you would be a Christian, you are not only to believe in Christ, but you are to believe that God has been added to the practical values and efficiencies of life. There are many philosophies and some faiths which represent God as taking something away from life, imposing restrictions upon it. There are many things which man must not do lest he infringe upon the glory of God, but Christianity has added the glory of God to the value of life.

There are many philosophies which represent God as unsearchable and unknowable. The mind is for ever seeking after Him if it has not definitely settled that He is not to be found. But Christianity begins with the assurance and the assertion that God has been found; He has revealed Himself through His Son Jesus Christ. That is what the New Testament teaches us. It begins with the belief and the assertion that God has been found, that henceforth He is not so much to be sought as to be loved and obeyed. God is to be added to the forces of life.

And not only so, for when God comes He brings a new realm of power with Him, He brings the resources of the spiritual world to the aid of man. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.' It is as if a man who had been a manual worker, and had known no other implements than such as he himself could wield, were brought into a power-house where the potencies of steam and electricity were laid at his service. Henceforth his strength is as that of twenty men, new powers have come within his reach.

Plainly the New Testament gives us to understand that man's resources have been reinforced by God. A man who is in God through Jesus Christ is expected to be more efficient than he who stands outside that relationship. He is in touch with resources that the other man does not know; he can add to the powers of body and of mind the powers of the spiritual world.

That is precisely what was the case with the early Christians. Nobody supposes they were weak men. As Dr. Glover has said in one of his books, Christian folk 'out-thought, out-lived, out-died' the folk who were around them. The triumphs that came to them were triumphs that came because they were manifestly more vital than others. This faith of theirs had strengthened their personality and increased their vitality.

Christianity is power. If it be not that, let it go! We must win back, if we have lost our way, to the discovery of the power that is in the faith of Christ.

Now, apart from the great dogmas which give us our basis and upon which we stand, the medium by which the power of God is manifested in the life of man is prayer. Prayer is power, it is not mere supplication. They do not understand prayer who regard it merely as supplication to God. There are many folk who never pray except when they want God to do something which they cannot do or have not done for themselves. Now that kind of prayer is hurtful to man if it be long persisted in.

If my conception of prayer is only that God may do something for me which I cannot or will not do for myself, then it is a dangerous thing. The prayer of a mendicant, the prayer of a suppliant, who hushes his own powers to sleep and waits upon the Divine Being to do something for him, that kind of prayer is not noble. It may be that all of us are forced at times into positions in life in which that kind of prayer is involuntary, and we who know our own secret do not judge hardly others who may be similarly placed; but, taken as a philosophy of prayer, it is all wrong. If that is all that prayer is, then a man is rather to be admired who puts it away from him, stands upon his own feet, looks for his help within,

in order to find resources that may be latent. There is no grace in that which emasculates and devitalizes.

The pity of it is that so many people have just that notion concerning prayer. Now the truth is, prayer is power. It is the means by which a man enters into fellowship with the Divine and learns to use the spiritual resources of God. It is a means by which he who has only laboured with his hands in manual toil is introduced into the mysteries of the power-house and learns the secret of invisible forces. Prayer is power.

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.' Blessed be the God who has added that to our equipment, and blessed be the exercise we call prayer, by which we may learn how to use those resources—learn, not all at once, but through the long experiences of life—that there are powers in the universe which are not outside the realm of law, which are not contrary to that great line of law which runs through the whole world from the rocks that are at its base up into the highest heaven. Blessed be the means by which we learn to call to our help the invisible forces of God.

So I want to suggest that the first thing we want to do when we wish to pray is, Be strong. You remember how St. James puts it; he says, we must 'ask in faith . . . for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.' 'Let not that man think,' he says, 'that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.'

Now, we know that instability of character is a damning thing for any man in ordinary walks of life; little can be done for him; and instability of character is equally hurtful in the realms of the spirit. If we would pray, let the first thing we do be to strengthen ourselves. Let us look within to find where we are weak, and, when we have discovered our weakness, let us try to strengthen ourselves. We had better start curing those evil habits of ours, bracing ourselves, reinforcing ourselves with all the resources that God has given us. And they are many.

Think back over this old Book of ours. Were not the men of prayer always men of power? Sometimes we hear them confess their weakness, but that is one of the signs of power. The man who is self-sufficient does not know what life is, he is living on a low plane, he is dealing with paltry things, he is counting his wealth in mere material substance, he has not begun to live. It is the man of the spirit who, while he is actually the stronger man, is yet more conscious of his weakness, because his range is wider, his vision is clearer. There is no fear of any man who knows what it is to pray becoming self-centred or self-sufficient or conceited.

But away with the thought that we must pray only when we are weak. Let us pray when we are strong! There are mighty evils round about us which need curing, and most people are trying to cure them on a low plane. There are a thousand people hacking away at the branches of evil for every one who is cutting at the root. There are a thousand people trying to cure evil by a mere change of system or a mere transference of power for every one who is perceiving the spiritual causes of evil and bringing to bear upon them the spiritual resources of God.

Men and women of prayer are wanted whose conception of communion with the Divine is so big and noble and great that they have scarcely room to make personal requests, scarcely the inclination to seek some mere good for themselves, but a desire that grows deeper and stronger for the kind of life and thought that is in relation to the great Source of all Good, and can be brought down to bear upon our daily life. The man or the woman who realizes even part of this great secret becomes magnetic, dynamic. It is God's choicest gift to the human soul. It is a linking of the human with the Divine.[1]

[1] F. W. Norwood, *Moods of the Soul*, 142ff.

In the Heavenlies.

Eph. i. 3, ii. 6, iii. 10, vi. 12.—'In the heavenly places.'

'In the heavenly places'; more simply and more literally still, 'In the heavenlies'—it is the refrain to which this Epistle to the Ephesians returns again and again. The melodies of the everlasting chime which ring and echo through the Holy Book are distinct and various; and this is the melody which belongs specially to these chapters.

It is a wonderful tribute to Christ and Christianity that a prisoner should live and move and have his being 'in the heavenlies.' When he wrote the Epistle, Paul was a captive in Rome, confined to his own hired room, watched over day and night by the legionaries of Cæsar, his left hand fettered to the wrist of one of Nero's guardsmen. But the narrow little chamber could not shut him in. It seemed as if its solid and rigid walls dissolved into thin air, and he walked at liberty through a spacious land, with wide horizons and fruitful fields and a thousand beauties and grandeurs. Its citizens crowded round him. Its Golden Prince was his intimate Friend. From the restrictions and discouragements of his immediate surroundings he escaped to the freedom, the dignity, and the power of the heavenlies, and none was so rich or so glad as he. And that is what Christ has done, and is doing still, not for royal souls like Paul's alone, but for multitudes of humbler men and women.

The heavenlies, therefore, are not to be restricted to the world of the future, which lies on the farther side of the grave. That is where St. John found them: in the New Jerusalem, where there is no more death or sorrow or curse, for the former things are passed away. But St. Paul finds them nearer at hand. To him they are a sphere of experience and action and discovery with which he is already familiar. They are a stage and an arena where the real events of his life transpire. We shall never know the heavenlies of to-morrow unless we are breathing the air and enjoying the privilege and doing the work of the heavenlies of to-day. The one is forerunner of the other, its suburbs and outcourts, its porch and gateway.

So here are four pictures of the heavenlies, where a Christian man is to spend his history in the present. They are a warm and wealthy home. They are a king's throne and seat. They are a dramatic and enthralling spectacle. And they are a field of keen, hot battle.

1. The heavenlies are *a home*—the warmest and the wealthiest of homes.

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' Paul says and sings, 'who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.'

Once we were outside the threshold, in the dark night, in the cold winter, in the distance of banishment, in self-will and sin. We had our possessions and joys; but they were not the best possessions, nor the joys which endure and last. At heart we were poor, wretched, miserable, blind, naked. But the Father pitied us, and led us, through the persuasion of His Spirit, and in the grace of His Son, from our exile without to the light and heat and provision and plenty within. We think of the old deprivation and the new abundance; we remember the sheer kindness and goodwill which have wrought the change; and we take up Paul's psalm and bless God.

For this is no ordinary home in which we find ourselves. It is amazing, incomparable. Its foundations were laid in eternity, and our place in it was appointed then: 'Ere suns and moons could wax and wane, God thought on me, His child.' And as for the riches we discover waiting within its walls for our appropriation, an inventory of these is next to impossible. Paul attempts the catalogue, but it is like to baffle even his capacious soul and his tumultuous pen. Adoption and sonship, acceptance and God's favour, redemption and the forgiveness of sins, membership and inheritance in the mighty family Christ is gathering to Himself, the seals and the tokens and the foretastes of glories yet in front: thus the great thoughts and the kindling words

chase each other in rapid succession. And all this is ours when the Father blesses us, through the Spirit, in Christ.

The Scottish wanderer, looking back across the width of the world to the shade of his roof-tree and the dear days of old, says wistfully, 'Home was home then, full of kindly faces; home was home then, happy for the child.' But there is no home to compare with that which, now and always, is ours in Christ Jesus.

2. Next, the heavenlies are *a king's throne* and centre of government and authority.

'God,' Paul writes, 'who is rich in mercy . . . hath quickened us . . . and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' And, a few sentences before, he had defined these heavenlies more exactly. They are where the Father has placed His well-beloved Son, now that the obedience and the Cross and the sepulchre and all the humiliation are past—'at his own right hand.' They are the seat of supremest majesty and highest rule. Christ is there, wearing the crown, wielding the sceptre, invested with undisputed dominion; and, wonder of wonders! —can we believe it? are we living as if it were true?—we are intended to be there also, side by side with this risen and prevailing and victorious Christ.

It means a marvellous nearness to God. The Son is with the Father, at His right hand, close to Him as He can be; and we, the younger children, share in this friendship and intimacy which our Elder Brother knows so perfectly and rejoices in without intermission or break. So far as our finite souls can receive what His infinite soul welcomes in its fullest measure, His communion with God is our communion; and that spells liberty and kinghood and peace. And it means a quiet, purposeful, triumphant sovereignty. Once the waves and billows went over Christ; but now He sits Master and Monarch, and the floods do His bidding and execute His behests, and actually help forward His cause. And this, when we are united with Him, is our position and our rest and our reign. We are not at the mercy of men and events, even when these seem unfriendly. We are not the sport of winds and storms. We should cherish the calm conviction that they are working together for our good. We should be more than conquerors over them, refusing to let them hurt us, and extracting a positive blessing from them.

3. The heavenlies are *a drama*, an exhibition, a spectacle of endless and enthralling interest.

In the heavenlies, Paul declares, the Church makes known to the principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God. They are the scene where, in age after age and land after land, the Church has played its part and spoken its message and fulfilled its mission. The angels, cherubim who know and seraphim who burn, are watchers and students of the scene; it holds their attention as nothing else can, and stirs their wonder, and compels their worship, and calls forth their sympathy and praise.

The Church, but where is the Church? Not in venerable councils and assemblies alone, nor in splendid cathedrals, nor in the throng of vast congregations. It is where two or three meet in the name of Jesus Christ, and are taught by His Word and Spirit. It is in this separate and single soul which has been touched by the flaming coal from the altar of God, which was once dead but is now alive, which is being sanctified more and more as it looks away unto Jesus—its First, and Last, and All in all—which believes and loves and prays.

'Where is the Church of God in Scotland at this day?' Alexander Peden said. 'It is not among the great clergy. I will tell you where it is. It is wherever a praying young man or young woman is at a dykeside in Scotland. That's where the Church is.' And again he would encourage his hearers: 'If there be one of you, Christ will be the Second. If there be two, He will be the Third. Ye shall never want Company.'

So in us the Church may be summed up, the whole drama of the heavenlies may be enacted, and the angels may behold in operation the manifold wisdom of God—His righteousness joining with His love to redeem us,

His ingenuity and His patience training us into the likeness of His Son, His skill and resource and strength put forth without cessation and without stint for our perfecting. Surely we would reverence ourselves more, and would let God have more unfettered scope within us, if we recollected habitually that we are a lesson-book and spectacle to the principalities and powers of the unseen world.

4. Last of all, the heavenlies are *a field of* fierce, keen, hot *battle.*

'Our wrestling,' Paul writes, 'is not against flesh and blood, but . . . against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.'

Paul sees in every redeemed and new-created soul a kind of irresistible magnet which draws to it all the inhabitants of the invisible world. There are pure and radiant principalities above us who learn from us that God is matchlessly wise. There are dark and malignant principalities below us who crowd around us with the intention of spoiling and wrecking the Divine life which the wisdom of God makes our own. The Apostle is sure of their existence. Demonic and Satanic beings are very real to him, very subtle, very pitiless. They want to sap our intellectual belief, insinuating into the mind doubts of the most central facts and truths in our Christian faith. They try to spoil our devotional experience, suggesting some querulous complaint or some corrupting imagination when we are kneeling at prayer or reading God's Word or sitting at the holy table of our Lord. They are eager to drag down and besmirch our practical godliness, to trap us into inconsistent and unworthy conduct, to mar and weaken our witness to our Master. Let us not be ignorant of their devices. These devices are many, and persevering, and plausible, and intended to succeed.

But there is no reason why they should succeed. Once we were subjects of those evil powers. They could do with us then what they liked; we were citizens of their own commonwealth. But now we are transported into the heavenlies, and are ourselves part and parcel of the heavenlies. The spiritual hosts of wickedness are not at home there. It is not their sphere. They do certainly invade its precincts. They approach us. They tempt us. They strive hard to seduce us from our dwelling and our Lord. There is no victory over which they would more rejoice than that. But the victory need never be theirs. Let us pause to recollect the safeties and the liberties and the glories of the dwelling, and it will be an utter impossibility to part with them. What is more essential still, let us cast ourselves afresh on the Lord, and He will undertake for us against the adversary. 'We wrestle,' Paul says; but our wrestling is our trust in Christ, our cry to Christ, our confidence that Christ is more than all who are against us.

God bring every one of us into the Heavenlies through Jesus the Door.[1]

The Highest Life.

Eph. i. 3, 4.—'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love.'

Four times Paul writes of life in Christ as dwelling in 'the heavenlies,' by which term he means a life of transcending perfection and blessedness.

What is this highest life? In a word, it signifies a sincere attempt to reduce the Christian creed to experience and practice; to strive to be and to do whatever our faith demands. It means that we love God with 'all our mind, and soul, and strength.' Whosoever aspires to the ideal life must be able to say with St. Paul, 'I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii. 20). The law of Christ determines the whole programme of life, and the love of Christ becomes the effectual motive to universal obedience. They who will be perfect must be one with Him as the branch is one with the vine, not as the mistletoe which

[1] A. Smellie, *Sunset Glory*, 66ff.

finds shallow rootage in a crevice, or as the ivy or orchid that takes precarious hold by a tendril. To live the higher life is to possess the mind of Christ, to reflect His image, to walk in His steps. Or, to put it from another point of view—which is not another—only as the Holy Spirit dwells richly in our hearts, illuminating, energizing, hallowing them, can we reach the shining heights, where it is good to dwell with the Master, to see His glory, and to be changed into the same image. The highest life is to make the thought of godliness the ruling idea of the mind, the master-passion of the heart, the supreme law of conduct and action.

What does this imply and promise?

1. *Enlargement of vision.*—Living on lower grades of spiritual life, we find it difficult to grasp the great articles of our creed, and were it not for the rare moments which come in the poorest lives we might lose our hold of them altogether. Living so near to the worldly, how many things intrude upon us and obscure the great truths by which we live! Soon they are only dimly seen; and when no longer vividly realized, how easy it is to deny them! Very different is the case when we live near to God.

¶ Public attention has more than once been directed to dangers threatening Greenwich Observatory. This institution stands on a hill 150 feet high, but chimneys 250 feet high rise from the river-bed above the domes of the Observatory, and interfere with the observation of certain stars; whilst the disturbance occasioned by the hot air and smoke discharged by these stacks causes serious trouble to the astronomer. Is not this a metaphor of the danger to our faith and peace by remaining on the more depressed levels of life?

The Lick Observatory, on Mount Hamilton, California, standing on ground 4,000 feet high, is remote from all chimneys; it is nearer to the stars and beholds them with open vision.

2. *Purity of Character.*—A rare degree of purity is another implication of the highest life. 'He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love.' Long before that recent event, the palæolithic period, in the counsels of eternity God determined that all believers in Christ Jesus should become 'partakers of the Divine nature'—so far as that is possible to a creature—reflecting the Divine glory, knowing His peace. Every believer in Christ from the hour of spiritual birth receives this power and privilege. 'That ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth' (Eph. iv. 23, 24). By faith, resolution, and diligence we may grow in grace, and attain to the stature of men in Christ Jesus.

(1) Such purity means an interior perfection. This is the first aim of one who would live the higher life. The training of the conscience becomes a primal duty. The conscience of a Christian may be a rude organ, whose judgments are crude and unsafe, but climbing higher it is touched to finer issues. It is wonderful to what perfection the eye can be educated. Herschel thought that the workers on the mosaics of the Vatican could distinguish at least thirty thousand different shades of colour. It is equally surprising to what perfection the ear may be trained. Weber said that musicians can distinguish notes separated in the scale of sound by only one-sixtieth part of a musical tone. To what perfection, then, may not the conscience be raised! We are often struck by the majestic moral judgments of our Lord; their exquisite discrimination, their authority, instantaneousness and unanswerableness, are most impressive. It is impossible to yield ourselves entirely up to God and to live to His glory without the conscience acquiring a sensitiveness, truthfulness and sovereignty far excelling that of the natural man.

(2) It means also an outward goodness. The reality of interior sanctification is evidenced by excellence of character and conduct. Out of profound spirituality ought to spring commanding practical goodness. We are told by the naturalist that on their native rocks and ledges Alpine flowers are specially rich and

gorgeous. The deep blue of the gentians, as well as crimson, rich reds, purple, gold-yellow, and pure white are scattered in lavish profusion. Lowland flowers when transferred to Alpine gardens at 6,000 feet become richer and deeper and more vivid in colour. The reverse is equally true, for these mountain plants are neither so gorgeous nor so rich planted in the lowlands as on their native rocks and ledges; their colour fades, their glory is lost. Is not this a parable of the graces of life as cultivated on the lowlands of experience, or on its mountain heights? We cannot define the beauty of character felt in sincere spiritually-minded people, any more than we can define other forms of beauty; yet it is undeniable that there is a singular charm of character in the genuine saint. We cannot live 'quite on the verge of heaven' without sharing in its beauty and sweetness.

3. *A perfected blessedness.*—To attain the heights and dwell there implies a perfected blessedness. 'Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.' 'And Peter answered, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here' (Matt. xvii. 4). It is always good to be with Him, the meaner elements beneath our feet. No experience of initial discipleship is without its deep satisfaction; but ascending the hill of the Lord and dwelling in the holy place, we see more fully the glory of the Lord, and receive more richly of His fullness. 'The heavenly places' must be good to live in. All things there are pure and delightful.

¶ Professor Joly tells of the vast number of bees and butterflies that he noticed in the higher Alps. It would seem that they quit the pastures and dare the glaciers, lured by the rarer sweetness of the flowers growing on the higher reaches of the mountain. Another writer testifies, 'No Greek honey can match the luxury you get among the Sennereien of the higher Alps. The flowers that thrive along the meridian of the snows offer the most delicious pasture for fastidious bees.' Once more we see as in a glass the image of the spiritual truth. Slighting all inferior gratifications, renouncing all dubious compromises, giving himself wholly to the Lord, the believer realizes a blessedness that he never knew as a half-hearted disciple. With the nearer approach, the closer communion, the full reliance of the heart in the promises of God and sincerest delight in the law of God, we find the restfulness and sweetness of which the psalmist sings so exultingly.[1]

Chosen in Christ.

Eph. i. 4.—'He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love.'

THESE words contain the doctrine of election. We were chosen; we were chosen of no merit of our own, for we were chosen 'before the foundation of the world.' We were chosen—not for confidence or carelessness, but for holiness and spotlessness—'that we should be holy and without blemish before him'; we were chosen indeed for love, the sum and perfecting of the graces; above all else and including all else, we were chosen in Christ.

1. *The Purpose.*—Before the choice, although that was 'before the foundation of the world,' there was a purpose in the mind of God. He resolved to choose us and He chose us 'that we should be holy and without blemish.'

(1) 'That we should be *holy*.' Holiness is not so much a quality as a posture. It is not so much an attainment as an attitude. It is a certain position rather than a matured disposition. We frequently use the word 'holy' as though it were synonymous with 'perfect' or 'spotless,' or 'absolutely pure.' This is not the primary import of the word. We cannot become perfect in a moment, but in a moment we can become holy.

¶ A little while ago I was passing through the village of Mytholmroyd and I saw the blankets from the factories spread out in the light for bleaching. Let us regard the process as an illustration. Holiness is not the resultant whiteness, but the position of the blankets.

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Shepherd of the Sea*, 162ff.

It is their attitude, the fact of their being stretched out before the light which is suggestive of the primary import of holiness. Holiness is the spreading out of one's being before the Lord. It is what the Psalmist calls the 'setting of the Lord always before me.' It is the posture, the ever-inclining towards the Lord in all things. An imperfect man may still be a holy man, and this explains why the Apostle Paul, writing to the Church in Corinth, a Church in which there remained much that was unworthy and immature, still addressed its members as 'The saints in Corinth.' The attitude of their souls was reverently bent towards the Lord, and in this inclination is to be found the very essence of holiness.[1]

(2) 'That we should be *without blemish.*' If we assume the attitude of holiness we shall inevitably reach the moral condition which can be described as 'without blemish.' Now this word 'blemish' receives illumination from its usage in the Old Testament Scriptures. To be without blemish is to have nothing about us diseased. 'A lamb without blemish!' There is no lurking defilement, no secret disease. In our life there is no lurking gangrene of envy, enmity, avarice, or selfishness. And to be without blemish also means that no limb is impotent or lame. Every power in the life will be firmfooted and sure. Nothing will go with a limp. The limbs of the spirit will all be vigorous, virile, and exuberantly strong.

(3) 'That we should be holy and without blemish *before him.*' The language is the language of sacrifice; the metaphor is sacrificial. The sacrifice is holy because offered to God, and the character of the victim must correspond with the character of Him to whom it is made. There must be no blemish. And it is God Himself who is here represented as deciding upon the fitness of the offering that is made to Him. We are to be without blemish *before Him.* As Bishop Lightfoot says of this, 'God Himself is thus regarded as the great *mōmoskopos* who inspects the victims and takes cognizance of the blemishes.'

¶ Words change the depth of their significance with changed environment. A word spoken in one place is greatly impoverished compared with the same word spoken in another. I heard a scavenger use the word 'clean.' He had done his day's work and he spoke of the streets as 'clean.' I heard a surgeon use the same word and he spoke of his instruments as 'clean.' But the significance of the latter usage was unspeakably deeper than the usage employed by the man in the streets. I go into the western highlands among the Hebrides, and I see the rude pottery manufactured by the peasant. It is placed in the oven and baked, and is then described as 'finished.' I hear the same word used in the pottery works at Worcester. But the 'finished' ware at Worcester has been brought into a refinement to which the Highland potter is quite a stranger. The word 'finished' used in Worcester suggests the application of exquisite skill and of consummate taste. And so it is with the word 'holy,' and the phrase, 'without blemish.' Used in one set of conditions their significance is infinite. When I look at myself, and my own conceit utters the words 'holy and without blemish,' the phrase has little or no content. If the words be used by my friends in their judgment upon me, the significance is still shallow. But when my God looks upon me and utters the words 'holy and without blemish,' their contents are unfathomable.[1]

(4) 'That we should be holy and without blemish before him *in love.*' This little addition to the text throws about it an unspeakable beauty. Holiness without love is anæmic. Devotion without love is always blanched. These qualities must be pervaded by love to be supremely beautiful.

¶ I was going through Windsor Castle a little while ago amid the gorgeous furniture and sumptuous adornments of that stately house. In every room I uttered some exclamation of surprise, to which my guide replied

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The Examiner*, Sept. 10, 1903, p. 252.

[1] J. H. Jowett.

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with one repeated response, 'Ah, sir, but you should see them lit up!' And so it is with holiness. 'You should see it lit up!' And the illuminant is love! All moral qualities get their rich colourings from the light of love. Heroism inspired by love is superlatively lovely. Beneficence without love is dim and unattractive; add love to beneficence and it is clothed in radiant robes. Truthfulness without love has little or no attractiveness; add love to truthfulness and she becomes a winsome guest. 'Speak the truth *in love.*' So it is with reverence, with holiness, with that quality of life which is described as 'without blemish.' They need the light of love if they are to reveal their richest hues. And love not only illumines, it inflames. It not only creates colour, it ministers warmth. It makes virtue genial and throws about duty a homeliness that makes its presence a delight.[1]

2. *The possibility of its fulfilment.*—He chose us *in Him*—that makes our holiness a possibility. And in Him possibilities become attainments, and ideals become realities. To Him there is spiritual energy for the sanctification of humanity. Christ is the spiritual reservoir for the human race. Our possibilities are gathered up in Him.

¶ One of our local district councils is announcing that its generating station is now ready 'to supply electricity for all purposes.' The authorities will supply power for all purposes—for lighting, heating, working; for illuminating our houses, for warming the rooms, for driving our machinery. What these authorities supply in the sphere of matter, the Lord Christ supplies in the world of the soul. He is the Generator! He supplies power 'for all purposes!' 'In Him' we find power for the illumination of the mind, power for the inflaming of the affections, power for the doing of duty, power for the smooth running of the wheels of life in the monotonous ruts of daily toil.[2]

(2) He chose us in Him because only in Him could we be holy and without blemish. Here as everywhere the Master's words meet us, to call us away from all self-help. 'Without me ye can do nothing.' As high as the heaven is above the earth, so far is the distance from self-crucifixion to *crucifixion in Christ.* To pass from the one to the other requires but a single trusting look of faith. But it is to cross 'the whole diameter of being' between the spotless Lamb of God and the guilty children of men. That there is a sacrificing of self that is inseparable from the gospel idea of discipleship is unquestionable. But it is not that which is wrought for obtaining peace with God, but that which grows out of a peace already obtained in the crucified Christ. The whole course of the Divine life is from Christ to self, and not from self to Christ. To begin an expiation in one's own sufferings, hoping that it may end in fellowship and union with Christ's sufferings, is not only to transpose, but completely to vitiate, the order of grace. There is nothing of ours, soul, body, or spirit, that is without blemish. And so from that reliance on penance and mortification which, however sincere, is an obtrusion of self into that realm of sacrifice which Christ alone can fill; and from that searching in a bruised and excruciated conscience for peace which, however honest, is but an attempt to discover in self that sin-offering which can be found only in the bleeding Lamb of God, how gratefully we turn to Christ crucified as our only true resting place for comfort! 'Let me know that I have repented enough and suffered enough' is the voice of a faith that is still in bondage to law. The voice of a faith that is free is, 'Let me hear that Christ died in the stead of sinners, of whom I am chief; that on His cross I paid the penalty of my guilt'.

¶ The question is not what you can do by your own efforts, but what the Spirit of God can do supernaturally and miraculously if you place yourself in God's hands? Let Him accomplish the purpose for which He breathed into you the breath of human life. I am continually witnessing the miracle of men being brought out of darkness into light, out of the bondage of evil into the glorious liberty of the

[1] J. H. Jowett.
[2] *Ibid.*

sons of God. This is a greater miracle than curing the sick. It is one of those 'greater things' (John i. 50) which God promised should be repeated in every age. I know thousands of men and women, now bright and radiant, who declare that this marvellous change has been wrought in them by Christ. The Apostle Paul said, 'I can do all things.' That is a bold statement even for an Apostle. But he adds, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,' *i.e.*, in living union with Christ. With that explanation it is no longer presumptuous. It is no more a question of what Paul can do, but of what God can do if Paul allows God to have His own way. We, too, may repeat the bold words of St. Paul on the same condition, and under the same circumstances.[1]

Our Possessions.

Eph. i. 7.—'In whom we have . . . the forgiveness of sins.'

'We have.' Here are two very simple words; in the Greek they are but one. Yet they enfold a wealth of truth and blessing, rightly taken, and rightly used. The words occur in many other passages of Scripture, in connexions of inestimable value. As, for example, Heb. vi. 19; 'Which hope *we have* as an anchor of the soul.' Or again, Heb. viii. 1: 'We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.' Or again, Eph. ii. 18; 'Through Him *we both have* access by one Spirit unto the Father.' And with such sentences we may of course group such as these, for they are practically identical in phrase—1 Cor. vi. 19; 'Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which *ye have* of God'; and 2 Cor. vii. 1; '*Having* therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit'; and Heb. x. 19; '*Having* . . . boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near . . . with a true heart in full assurance of faith'; and 1 John v. 12; '*He that hath* the Son *hath* life.'

1. What is the message of this class of passages, this rich and beautiful wealth of jewels of the Word, strung on this golden thread, 'we have'? It is that there is a large and all-important place in our Christian life for the use of humble but most positive assertion of our possessions. There is indeed, and must be to the end, ample room for the soul's aspirations and petitions, its search and effort after things yet unattained. But even for these exercises of the spiritual life it is all-important that we, if we are Christians indeed, if we have really come to the Lord in our need, to touch Him, and to live by Him, should never forget the right sort of assertion of the possessions which we have.

We may go round the whole circle of the gems strung upon this thread, 'we have.' Are we wistful and weary over the question of intercourse with God? Are we mourning over intermittent and cold approaches? Let us re-affirm to ourselves our privilege of approach, our *entrée*, free and welcome, to His very heart: we have access with confidence; we have entrance into the Holiest. Are we longing for a fuller flow of the life of the Lord in our life, for a larger power of His Spirit in our spirit? Let us re-affirm the initial fact that, having the Son, we have life'; 'we have the Holy Ghost from God.' The treasure is here; we have but to get it out by simple faith, and set it free for use. Are we troubled in any direction, about our souls, our work, our beloved ones? Let us begin every act of petition with that sublimely simple affirmation, 'we have such an High Priest.'

2. Take up, in illustration and application, just one of the 'possession' texts, the one before us in Eph. i. 7; 'We have . . . the forgiveness of sins.' To ask for forgiveness is, from one point of view, the daily duty of the child of God. 'Forgive us our trespasses' stands side by side with, 'Give us this day our daily

[1] H. Price Hughes, *Essential Christianity*, 82.

bread,' as the child's petition at the Father's side. But from another point of view, and in order to the truer and surer use of the petition, it is all-important to affirm often to ourselves that '*we have* redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.' By His most precious sacrifice of peace, by the blood of the Lamb, we, believing, have 'received power to become the sons of God.' And the sons of God, in that blessed inner sense of sonship (the sense on which, above all others, Scripture delights to dwell), who are they? Forgiven sinners, welcomed as such to the life and love of a Father's home. Their wonderful forgiveness is embodied in just this, that they are children at home, assured of home-privileges and home-affections. They are transferred from the court of justice (where they, the guilty, for the sake of the Beloved, have been acquitted) into the palace-home of the grace of God. In that home they are under paternal discipline; they often need paternal forgiveness, and must often ask it. But they are at home, securely there, welcome there, beloved there. They are the Lord's redeemed ones, in wonderful fact. They 'have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.' So they are to look in their Father's face, even when they ask their Father's pardon, and to affirm to themselves that, in the deep, antecedent sense, they are forgiven; they are not rebels on trial, but children welcomed home. Will they not ask Fatherly pardon in detail with all the deeper tenderness, all the more self-reproach, all the more loyalty of love, because of that wonderful 'we have'? [1]

[1] H. C. G. Moule, *Thoughts for the Sundays of the Year*, 184ff.

¶ Samuel Wesley's death in November 1739 was the heaviest blow which could have fallen upon his widowed mother. He had always been her favourite son—he shared her most intimate thoughts—and even in a pecuniary sense the loss of his support would be very great. She was ill at the time, having been confined to her room for ten weeks. Yet once again her children were surprised by the way in which she was 'strengthened to bear' this new calamity. 'I did immediately acquiesce in the will of God, without the least reluctance.' Perhaps the comfort which had come to her a few weeks before in her spiritual life, accounted in some measure for the calm which she now showed. This experience marked the hour when she was completely won over to her son John's doctrine, and is best told in his own words: 'I talked largely with my mother, who told me that till a short time since, she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned as the having forgiveness of sins now, or God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit: much less did she imagine that this was the common privilege of all true believers. "Therefore," said she, "I never durst ask it for myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall (Patty's husband) was pronouncing those words in delivering the cup to me, "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee"; the words struck through my heart, and I knew God for Christ's sake had forgiven me all my sins" '.[1]

[1] M. R. Brailsford, *Susanna Wesley*, 119.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Eph. i. 7.—'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.'

I.

THE NEED OF FORGIVENESS.

1. The strongest proofs of the need of forgiveness, or, in other words, of the reality of the sense of sin, have been found by some observers in the universality of that sense, or at least in the fact which the dramatists of all ages have treated as the most certain and tragic element in human experience—the persistence and ineradicableness of a sense of guilt: the hopelessness of outrunning conscience, however successfully some versatile men may have

appeared to do so, upon their passions, or upon a strong ambition, or upon the cleaner carriage of an intellectual pursuit or a busy service of their fellows. Neither the most powerful nor the most pure absorptions of which the heart is capable are of themselves sufficient to redeem a man from the conscience of a selfish, a cruel, or a cowardly deed.

In primitive religions the need of forgiveness found its expression in crude and oft-times horrible forms of propitiatory rites and ceremonies. As civilization advanced, the propitiatory rites became more refined. There was, for instance, the substitution of the sacrifice of the brute animal for the human individual, the slaughter of innocent lambs and turtledoves instead of the murder of innocent children and hapless women; but the object of the propitiatory rite remained the same—to appease the wrath of the God who had become estranged by men's sins. When civilization had so far advanced that men could no longer think of God as an angry Potentate, but only as a just Sovereign, the propitiation by the sacrifice of beasts became, in turn, displaced by the propitiation thought to inhere in the sacrifice of one man once for all. But even after this sacrifice, 'once for all,' we find men still praying for their restoration into that harmony with God which they felt had been broken by their own wrong-doings.

2. But more convincing than this inevitableness of conscience in all men, however hardy and reckless, is the fact that the sense of sin appears most keen and painful in the purest and the truest hearts: that it is the most holy of our race who have most acutely felt their guilt and need of forgiveness. Which of us can remain unashamed in presence of the shame of the Saints? With that shame also the Bible is red. The verses which burn with it, the Psalms, which are blotted with its tears or broken by its sobs, are to-day and for ever will be, the confessional of humanity.

¶ The words of St. Paul, 'sinners of whom I am chief,' are not the mock modesty of a popular preacher; they are the deep and poignant cry of the God-stricken soul in every age; so genuine that at times we deem them morbid. Morbid or not, they are the actual utterance of the inmost being of men so diverse as St. Augustine, Pascal, Bishop Andrewes, Pusey, Bunyan.[1]

3. Because man is universally conscious of sin, he is also conscious of the need for forgiveness. He may not explain the need as the Christian would. He may have lost his sense of relationship to the throne of the Eternal. He may speak of forces where the Christian speaks of God. But there is no man who knows his failure who does not, in the deepest of him, wish it had not been, wish it could be undone, regret the fact of it. The passion for perfection is one of the common inheritances of the human heart. No man is really, in his deepest life, content with imperfection. Every man admires perfection. Every man would, if he could, realize it in every department of life. There is no man who loves sin. He may love the things that sin suggests to him, but every man is against his own sin.

Whiteness most white. Ah, to be clean again
  In mine own sight and God's most holy sight!
To reach thro' any flood or fire of pain
  Whiteness most white:

  To learn to hate the wrong and love the right
Even while I walk thro' shadows that are vain,
  Descending thro' vain shadows into night.

Lord, not to-day: yet some day bliss for bane
  Give me, for mortal frailty give me might,
Give innocence for guilt, and for my stain
  Whiteness most white.[2]

II.

THE METHOD OF FORGIVENESS.

1. Why should there be any *method* of forgiveness at all? Why does not God simply

[1] J. N. Figgis, *The Gospel and Human Needs*, 99.
[2] Christina G. Rossetti.

forgive us when we repent? We forgive men when they express their regret for their offence. In many cases, indeed, we forgive men who neither acknowledge nor feel that they have wronged us. We do not allow the wrong to kill our old affection for them, or to prevent us from rendering them all the kindly offices of friendship. In this merciful conduct we are but obeying the commandments of Christ and His Apostles: 'Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you.' 'Avenge not yourselves. . . . If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. . . . Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.' Can we believe that God requires us to show a greater magnanimity, a more generous love, a freer mercy to those who sin against us than He shows to those who sin against Himself?

(1) It does not follow that what may be right and beautiful in our conduct towards a fellow-man is the rule and law of the Divine conduct towards him; for God's relations to him are wholly different from ours. Even among ourselves that which is right in one man may be wrong in another. Different relations create different moral duties. A boy has treated his brother with wanton and reckless cruelty; the injured brother may feel no resentment and may entreat his father to inflict no punishment. There is beauty and nobleness in his magnanimity and generosity. But the father may be under the most stringent obligation to punish the offender and to punish him severely. The relation between father and child is different from that between brother and brother.

A good, kindly man is violently assaulted on the highway, and, after being robbed, is left half dead. He knows the criminal, but is unwilling to prosecute; he wishes to treat him as Christ charges us to treat our enemies; he wants to show him kindness and to assist him to live a better life. That is the proof of a most gracious and merciful temper. But the assault was witnessed by the police; it is not their business to show kindness to the criminal, but to seize him and bring him to justice. The offence is proved in court; it is not the business of the judge to arrange to send the man home and to find him money to support him till he can get employment, his business is to inflict on him a just sentence; for the judge is a minister of God, an avenger of wrath to him that doeth evil; and 'he beareth not the sword in vain.'

It may be said that the relation between father and child is analagous to the relation between God and man; and that if a father does not require an 'atonement' before forgiving his child's sin, we have no reason to suppose that God will require an 'atonement' before forgiving ours. But no human relations can adequately represent the relations between God and ourselves; and the analogy between the relation of a father to a child and the relation of God to man breaks down at a critical point—the point on which the whole question of the necessity for an 'atonement' depends. The powers of a father are limited by a higher Authority; he is not the supreme moral Ruler of the child; the father is a sinner as well as the child. You cannot argue that because a father does not ask for an 'atonement' before he forgives his child, God cannot ask for an 'atonement' before He forgives us. God is the Representative and Defender of the Eternal Law of Righteousness in a sense in which an earthly father is not.

The New Testament nowhere represents God as a Father only. A Father of infinite love and tenderness He is. It is our Lord's supreme revelation of Him; but is He not Sovereign and Magistrate as well? If He be represented in the parable of the Prodigal son, is He not represented also in the parables of the Talents, the Ten Virgins, Dives and Lazarus? If His words are words of infinite love, are they not words also of inflexible holiness? What warrant have we for taking one aspect of the Divine character and ignoring another? The tenderest father, if also a magistrate, would not disregard law and forbear penalty, even were his own son brought a transgressor to his judgment seat. Moral right and wrong are not mere expediencies, they are the most inviolable things of God. God 'declares his righteousness in the remission of sins,' not His

mercifulness merely. He strictly maintains His righteousness in the grounds and conditions of His forgiveness.

(2) What, then, is the method of God's forgiveness of sin? The Apostle says first that it is 'in Christ,' and then that it is 'through his blood.' He does not say that we realize this blessing *through* Christ, but *in* Christ, in virtue of our essential union with Christ. Christ is, so to speak, the reason and ground of God's merciful dealings with us, the enabling cause of our redemption: not the *disposing* cause, for Christ Himself was the gift of God's love, but the *enabling* cause, making the redemption a possible and practicable thing. In Paul's idea the redemption in Christ stands out as something altogether unique, enshrined in distinctive grandeur. The definite article is used, 'In whom,' he says, 'we have *the* redemption'—the one great deliverance of sinful men. That redemption, he says, is procured for us 'through his blood,' and it consists in 'the forgiveness of sins.'

¶ The history of the world morally viewed is a tragedy. All the great tragedy of the world turns upon its guilt. Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Goethe, Ibsen, all tell it you. The solution of the world, therefore, is what destroys its guilt. And nothing can destroy guilt but the very holiness that makes guilt guilt. And that destruction is the work of Christ upon His Cross, the Word of Life Eternal in your hands and in your souls.

The supreme problem of the moral world is sin. Its one need is to be forgiven. And nothing but holiness can forgive. Love cannot. We are both forgiven and redeemed in Jesus Christ and in Him as crucified unto the world for the holiness of God and the sin of men.[1]

(3) But our redemption is not only in Christ, it is 'through his blood.' Now it is impossible to read the New Testament without noticing the constancy of this figure. All the writers and teachers make use of it in one way or another. 'Purchased with his own blood'; 'justified by his blood'; 'having made peace through the blood of His cross'; 'redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold . . . but with precious blood . . . even the blood of Christ'; 'if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.'

The four Evangelists, who differ so much in their accounts of our Lord's birth and public ministry, seem to meet at last around the foot of the Cross, and to agree, if not in relating the same incidents, yet, certainly, in the minuteness of the detail of their narratives. In the shortest of the Gospels, when we reach the Passion the occurrences of a single day take up a space which had been assigned to years. From the last supper to the burial in the grave of Joseph of Arimathea we have a very complete account of what took place from hour to hour. Each incident that added to the pain or the shame, each bitter word, each insulting act, each outrage upon justice or upon mercy, of which the Divine Sufferer was a victim, is carefully recorded. But especially the agony and bloody sweat, the public scourging, the crowning with thorns, the nailing to the wood of the cross, the opening of the side with a spear, are described by the Evangelists —incidents, each one of which, be it observed, must have involved the shedding of Christ's blood. And in the writings of the Apostles to their converts more is said of the blood of Christ than of anything else connected with His death—more even than of the Cross. As we read them we might almost think that the shedding of His blood was not so much an accompaniment of His death as its main object and purpose. Thus St. Paul tells the Romans that Christ is set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. He tells them that they are justified by the blood of Christ. He writes to the Ephesians that they have redemption through Christ's blood; to the Colossians, that our Lord has made peace through the blood of His cross; to the Corinthians, that the holy sacrament is so solemn a rite because it is the communion of the blood of Christ. Thus St. Peter contrasts the slaves, whose freedom from captivity was purchased with such corruptible things as silver and gold, with the case of Christians redeemed

[1] P. T. Forsyth.

from death by the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and immaculate. Thus St. John exclaims that the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth Christians from all sin; and in the Epistle to the Hebrews this blood is referred to as the blood of the covenant, wherewith Christians are sanctified; as the blood of the everlasting covenant; as the blood of sprinkling which pleads with God for mercy, and so is contrasted with the blood of Abel, which cries for vengeance. And in the last Book of the New Testament the beloved disciple at the very outset gives thanks and praise to Him 'who hath washed us from our sins in his own blood.' And the blessed in Heaven sing that He has redeemed them to God by His blood; and the saints are there because they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and they have overcome their foe, not in their own might, but by the blood of the Lamb; and He whose name is called the Word of God, and who rides in the vision on a white horse, and on whose head are many crowns, is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood.

And this word *blood* is at least definite. It is susceptible of no glosses, or disguises, or aliases. All the world over it has but one meaning. You can take the word *love* and you can dilute it away into *affection*, and away a little farther into *regard*, and still farther away into *esteem*, until it becomes a sort of moonlight quality, with all the original warmth and glow gone out of it. Esteem puts no tender hand under the aching head. Esteem helps no poor man up the hill. Esteem binds up no broken heart, and kindles no fire on the hearth that has gone out. It is too cold. So you can shade the word *truth* away through various synonyms such as *candour*, *frankness*, *veracity*, and the like, until it begins to mix with falsehood as day merges into night. But take the word *blood*, and see what you can make of it. As a matter of fact, you cannot soften or disguise it or clothe it in some other dress, or find for it some more genteel equivalent. No matter how dainty you may be in the use of language, if you want to speak of blood at all you have got to say *blood*, for the dictionary will not accommodate you with any synonyms. The word *blood* stands alone, and, as another has said, 'is too simple, too energetic, too solemn to take upon it the faintest gloss of the most reluctant expositor. Its unquenchable ardour burns through the snow which you scatter upon its summit. No winter can loiter upon those ardent slopes.' The word melts through and stands out in all its own naked and rugged strength. It is immensely significant. God has ordained that that upon which the salvation of mankind depends shall not be trifled with or disguised or softened away into something else.

¶ Some of us remember how contemptuously Theodore Parker, the distinguished Unitarian, spoke of the blood as preached by a large part of the Evangelical Church. He characterized it as the religion of the shambles. It was coarse and crude and repulsive to him. No doubt the crass realism of it has been exploited sometimes beyond what was wise. By vivid illustration and graphic description the attention has been fixed upon the symbol rather than upon the thing symbolized. But men who think ought to be able to penetrate beneath the surface, to get away from the shadow to the substance. Certainly the abuse of a thing ought never to lead a well-balanced judgment to reject and condemn it.

Some of our most significant and delightful hymns, which all intelligent Christians love to sing, are ruled out by the critics who insist upon being over-literal. Take Cowper's celebrated hymn, for example:—

> There is a fountain filled with blood
> Drawn from Immanuel's veins:
> And sinners plunged beneath that flood
> Lose all their guilty stains,

and it is said to be an offence against good taste, a song suggestive of the slaughter-house, or of some place of carnage. But to those who are not fettered by any slavish literalism, and who see the profound and blessed truth that lies behind, this hymn, and every other like it, is inspiring and beautiful.[1]

[1] R. F. Coyle, *The Church and The Times*, 98.

(4) What, then, does 'the blood' stand for? It stands for the life. Under the Mosaic economy the requirements in this respect were direct and stringent. Either in so many words, or in other words equivalent, the declaration is repeated, 'The blood is the life.' It is not so very long since the discovery was made by anatomists that the vitality of the entire bodily structure is in the blood. But that which is a truism of physical science to-day was a fact of revelation far back in the dim dawn of the world's history. The doctrine of salvation by blood is simply the doctrine of life for life. The life is in the blood, and hence when we say that we are saved by the blood of Christ we mean simply that He gave His life for our life.

¶ With what absorbing interest I have followed the story of David Livingstone and his matchless heroisms! Repetition, instead of making such a story stale and flat, only heightens the interest of it. Fiction is tame and romance is dull compared with the rehearsal of the unadorned facts of Livingstone's career. Think of a great, strong, capable, highly educated man leaving his native land, leaving all the comforts and advantages of civilization, pushing through swamp and jungle and forest; braving perils of wild beasts and of wilder men, gladly accepting the crushing and unspeakable solitude and isolation of interior Africa, in order that he might suffer and die for the poor degraded black man. Racked by disease, tortured by fever, pierced by pain, crippled with ulcers on his feet until every step was an agony, he nevertheless held on, inspired by the mighty love of his mighty heart. At last Stanley came. Deliverance was at hand. Surely he had earned the right to go home. But no, Africa, poor bleeding, neglected Africa, was on his soul, and in Africa he stayed, dying in a little grass hut on his knees, his last act, his last word a prayer for Africa; and that prayer stands chiselled upon his tombstone in Westminster Abbey to-day. His whole history gathers itself up into one great word—Substitution. Life for life. As long as the waves of the ocean beat out their solemn music on the shores of that land, they will never cease to chant the name of Livingstone and say, 'He died for Africa.'[1]

(5) This principle is fundamental in the religion of the Cross. It runs all through the Bible as the mother-lode runs through the range. Type and shadow and symbol and altar and sacrifice all find their explanation in the sublime, the heavenly thought of substitution, life for life. They all point forward to Calvary as every grey streak of dawn along the morning sky points forward to the splendours of noonday. All the hints of vicarious suffering in Nature, and all the suggestions and exhibitions of substitution among men, in store, and shop, and home, and missionary land, and battlefield, Christ gathers up and focalizes and gives their supreme manifestation once for all in the place of skulls. When did ever mother suffer, or father suffer, or missionary suffer, or soldier suffer, as Jesus suffered, who concentrated and carried in His holy heart all the woes, all the sorrows, all the sins of the world?

'How much more shall the blood of Christ.' Here is the blood not of a sacrificial animal, not of a mere man, not merely of the very best of men, but of One who was God manifest in the flesh. Who shall calculate the effects of His self-sacrifice? Who shall limit the powers of His voluntary death? Who shall say what His blood may or may not achieve on earth or elsewhere? Plainly we are here in the presence of an agency which altogether outdistances and rebukes the speculations of reason. We can but listen for some voice which shall speak to us with a Divine authority, and from beyond the veil. We can but be sure of this, that the blood of the eternal Christ must infinitely transcend in its efficacy that which was shed upon the temple altars. It must be equal —more than equal—to redress the woes, to efface the transgressions, of a guilty world.

[1] R. F. Coyle, *The Church and the Times*, 106.

III.

THE NATURE OF FORGIVENESS.

What is forgiveness of sin? Is it escape from punishment, the remission of penalty? A schoolboy is guilty of some grave moral offence, perhaps of some serious breach of discipline, and the schoolboy is sent to the headmaster for punishment. But he comes back unpunished, and the explanation which he gives of the fact is that he was forgiven by his master. He means that the penalty which he expected was not inflicted. Is, then, forgiveness the remission of penalty? Well, certainly, it is a part of what we mean when we say, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' Probably it is the simplest form in which forgiveness first becomes intelligible to the minds of men. But, then, is it really forgiveness? It is quite open to a man to hate the man whom he does not punish for some hurt inflicted; but, on the other hand, there may be punishment which does not contradict Nature, which rather seems to be a true expression of what we call forgiveness. It is easy to see that forgiveness is something more than the remission of penalties.

¶ Victor Hugo tells the story of a convict who had been doing penal servitude for nineteen years, and who is released on ticket of leave. He finds that on every hand men's doors are closed to him; but he comes at last to the door of a French bishop, and there he begs for food and shelter. And the food and the shelter are granted him. But he sees the bishop's silver-plate, and when he cannot sleep at night the temptation comes to him, and he yields to it. He takes the silver, and he goes. A few hours afterwards he is brought back by the police, and they are admitted into the presence of the bishop, 'Ah,' he says, 'I am glad to see you. I gave you the candlesticks too. They are worth ten pounds. Why did you not take them with the rest?' And he turns to the police, explains that a mistake has been made, that the captive must be let go free. The police leave, and then the bishop turns to the man and says to him, 'My brother, never forget that you have promised to employ this money in learning to be an honest man. You no longer belong to evil, but to good. I withdraw your heart from the spirit of perdition, and I give you to God.'

Now, to treat a guilty man as though he were not guilty, is that forgiveness? Certainly in some cases to do so would be an intolerable wrong. Here is a man who makes a livelihood out of vice. To treat that man as innocent would be sinful. But here is this man treated by his friend just as though he were innocent, and to the onlookers such action seems to be what someone has called 'an inspiration of wisdom,' the surpassing wisdom of love which is like the love of God. Where does the principle come in? It lies in the possibility of restoring the man to righteousness. But it is only so long as this restoration is a possibility that such forgiveness can be said to be really forgiveness, and find justification.

To repeat our question, then, What is forgiveness?

(1) *Forgiveness is the restoration of fellowship with God.*—It is the restoration of the sinner into the redemptive, strengthening love of God. It is accomplished by the voluntary co-operation of man with God. Through physical suffering and through mental anguish, through sorrow for the irremediable wrong done to one's self and to others, some of the inevitable punishment of sin must persist; but through the confession and true repentance of the sinner, through his willingness and determination to come back into harmony with the moral order which has been violated, God's eternal willingness to grant forgiveness is made operative and the harmony is restored. The restoration of the harmony through confession and true repentance is as inevitable in the law of God's love as the unpleasant consequences of sin are inevitable by the same law.

(2) *Forgiveness is God's trust in us making us efficient for service.*—So, long ago, Isaiah found it; when, immediately after his guilt had been removed by a sacrament of fire, he

felt himself receive—not, to begin with, a definite commission to God's people, but—the opportunity, upon his own will and motive, to give himself to the message and work which God proclaimed as open. He had called himself 'a man of unclean lips,' and dwelling 'in the midst of a people of unclean lips.' But when his iniquity was taken away and his sin purged; when he heard the voice of the Lord saying 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'—he himself, in the great consciousness of freedom which forgiveness brought, and in the full enjoyment of God's restored trust in him, cried out, 'Here am I, send me!' And at once he received his commission. So also, long ago, a Psalmist felt it—the Psalmist who, more than any other, declares to us the purely ethical motives that drive men to pray for pardon. Forgiveness came to him, too, as the instinct of a great commission from God, who trusted him. 'Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.' 'Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.' In the New Testament it is the same. Our Lord's announcements of pardon are sometimes followed by the words: 'Go and sin no more.' They are in the imperative mood, but it is the fashion of the grammar of the day. What they mean is—Thou wilt sin no more: I have confidence in thee! When Peter fell by denying his Lord at the critical hour, the assurance of forgiveness came to his heartfelt penitence in the gift of a new commission in his Lord's service. 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him: Feed my lambs,' and 'Feed my sheep,' and again 'Feed my sheep.'

¶ Tell a man that God so loved him that He gave His Son to die for him, and when the man believes it, though his heart was dry and obdurate, you shall indeed have wakened all over his experience the springs of wonder, gratitude and hope. But you cannot make him feel the depths of that love, you cannot carry his gratitude or his hope to their fullest pitch, you cannot add to his affections a new conscience or fortify them past every shock, till you tell him that God's love for him includes God's trust in his loyalty, in his power to make a new start, to stand firm, and, though he should be the most fallen and stunted of men, in his power to grow at last to the full stature of his manhood. Without this trust of God forgiveness is only indulgence and the experience of it becomes a mere escape. But with the sense of being trusted forgiveness becomes a conscience, and puts into a man a new sense of honour to do his best and his bravest for the God who believes in him.

> The fear o' hell's the hangman's whip
> To haud the wretch in order;
> But where ye feel your honour grip,
> Let that ay be your border!

And it is this sense of honour which forgiveness, when it is felt as God's great trust of him, plants in a man deeper and stronger than any other motive with which religion can endow him.[1]

(3) *Forgiveness is deliverance from sin.*—The etymology of the Greek word translated 'forgiveness' suggests freedom. The root idea is that of being 'sent out,' 'sent forth.' This particular word is variously translated in the New Testament, 'deliverance,' 'liberty,' 'remission,' 'forgiveness.' Let the text be read with some of these words substituted, 'In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the deliverance of our sins,' 'the liberty of our sins,' 'the remission of our sins.' It is a word which recognizes all the bondage into which our sins have brought us, the bondage of guilt, of pollution, of power. And it declares that by this redemption we are set free therefrom. Forgiveness is liberty from the guilt of sin, liberty from the pollution of sin, liberty from the power of sin.

[1] G. A. Smith, *The Forgiveness of Sins, and other Sermons*, 21.

¶ We are netted as a bird. We flutter up, but the meshes once again entangle us, and down we come to the ground, and the sky is as far off as ever. And what if, around and about this poor, this impoverished will, there were wrapped the irresistible might of a will that had not been broken, a will, new, fresh, undaunted, tough as steel, endurable as stone, firm as adamant?—what if the warmth of a love were laid about it to which the emotions of impure appetites are impossible?—what if we were given up to this love, so that it abode within us and possessed us, and held us fast, untroubled by our disasters, unhurt by our sins?—what if, after all our sinning, we still could turn back again and again to find this loving will there still, pure and strong as ever within us, still pressing, with unwearied patience, on towards the beauty of holiness, with its unwavering eyes ever fixed on the face of God, Would not this be enough? would not this be salvation? would not this be peace? 'Ye shall mount on eagles' wings.' That is our splendid assurance. No longer that fluttering tumult of the poor captives, tangled in the snare! Nay! but 'on eagles' wings'—the wings of God under us, kingly and unconquerable, as they beat their strong way upwards, let the winds blow as they may: 'on eagles' wings'—the wings of a holy will, the wings of a clean desire laid under us to bear us upwards.[1]

What vengeful rod
Is laid upon my bleeding shoulders?
What scourge, O God,
Makes known my shame to all beholders?

Through what vast skies
Crashes Thy wrath like shuddering thunders?
. . . . . .
Before my eyes
Thou dost display the wonder of wonders!

As punishment
To one whom sin should bind in prison,
Hath Mercy sent
Word of the crucified arisen!

Guilt's penalty
Exacted—past my reeling reason!—
Which lays on me
Love—as a whip fit for my Treason![1]

[1] H. Scott Holland, *Creed and Character*, 217.

Undiscovered Riches.

Eph. i. 7.—'The riches of his grace.'

In a published letter, Thoreau, who was not always the wisest adviser, for his chords of sympathy were not very plentiful or refined, gives this admirable counsel, which has, perhaps, wider significance than he conceived: 'Explore your own higher latitudes: nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought.' There is always very grave necessity that we should be reminded of the untraversed stretches of country in our own being. There are forests which hide wonderful possibilities. There are new trails to be cut in the domain of thought and imagination, which will open out vistas of light and beauty. What discernments are awaiting development! What sleeping powers, like the sleeping princesses in the old legend, are ready to spring into vigorous life and service! Yes, there are reaches of our own being which are like higher latitudes in undiscovered country.

How would the Apostle Paul have given Thoreau's counsel? Paul was very objective, and his counsels of exploration would lead us away from ourselves. 'Not I, but Christ!' 'While we look not at the things which are seen!' 'Beholding the glory of the Lord!' 'Looking unto Jesus!' If the Apostle had spoken to us of higher latitudes, and bidden us be as a Columbus in whole new continents and worlds, he would have been directing us to the glories of our unclaimed inheritance in Christ Jesus. There are hidden wonders in the untrodden realm of the Divine love. There are new trails to be followed through the tropical luxuriance of redeeming grace. What we have already discovered is only the find-

[1] T. Maynard, *Folly*, 68.

ing of a single leaf as compared with boundless forests! It is only the glint of a single nugget as compared with the wealth of unfathomable mines! And therefore would the Apostle have stirred our ambitions to covet and explore these waiting treasures, for 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'

And the wonderful thing is that we can use our common circumstances as implements and ministers of exploration. We can use a dark circumstance to find a bright one. They say in Yorkshire, 'Never a nettle without its dock!' Never a pain without there being at hand some compensating balm! Let the nettle lead you to look for the dock. Let the sting send you after the balm! Let some disappointment send you exploring for the riches of hope in Christ Jesus. Let some seeming failure stir you to gain the patience of unanswered prayer. Let some bereavement make you a zealous discoverer of the consolations of eternal life. Let your sin drive you in almost fierce quest of redeeming grace. Every circumstance may be used as an instrument of discovery, and every day we may advance more deeply into the higher latitudes of the wonderful love of God.[1]

God's Purpose.

Eph. i. 9, 10.—'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he had purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.'

For St. Paul Jesus was the central fact in history, Jesus crucified and risen; Jesus a Man born of woman, yet the Son of the love of the Father-God, representing to men that God who was in Him reconciling the world to Himself. And under the stress of this conviction St. Paul pours out to us here his philosophy of History in terms of the will and purpose of God. He has none of our modern knowledge to help or to hinder him. He knows enough of man and his history; and there is God. There was always Man and God; but now there is Jesus too. And now he knows both Man and God as they were never known before. Jesus is the key to the solution of the mystery, the intellectual and the moral mystery of the world. Jesus is entirely new. It is a new God and a new Man. And yet both were from the beginning.

What he says is this: that there has been a scheme, a plan, a purpose from before the foundation of the world running through all the ages. He says that provision was made for the accomplishment of this purpose in due course when the time for it was ripe. The meaning of the whole cosmic process of things-in-the-heavens and things-on-the-earth was to be concentrated, gathered together, summed up, as men could understand and see it, in a Person. This purpose of the long life-history of man and his environment was made plain in Jesus Christ: He was the crown, the climax, the supreme achievement, from the point of view of the long series of the times in which this purpose of the world was worked out.

1. Prior to the coming of Jesus there is a vast history of sin-stricken and struggling mankind. How about all those past ages? How about the measureless history of all the races of the east and west and south? How about our ancestors of prehistoric times, of the Bronze Age, of the Stone Age, and all the ages that preceded them? What was God's attitude to these dumb and nameless multitudes?

Christianity is very bold in its answer. The Apostles are, indeed, magnificent in their conceptions of what God has been doing through all human history. The Apostle John speaks of 'the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,' and the Apostle Paul, in passage after passage, writes of God as patiently and steadfastly working through all the ages to accomplish His great and loving purpose—'the purpose,' as he says in our text,

[1] J. H. Jowett, *Life in the Heights*, 104.

as translated by Dr. Weymouth, 'of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ.' To the Apostle Paul, the past generations are not waste years, unused years, merely years of fatal failure—they are rather years in which God is pursuing His unalterable purpose, not only of ultimately rescuing a few exceptional individuals from that wreckage caused by the Fall, but of restoring the whole creation. As he wrote to the Romans: 'the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.'

2. So, then, Christianity looks back on all the vast and appalling history of mankind and all those ages prior to any recorded history, as God's preparation for His great crowning act of redemption. Jesus Christ furnishes the key to the past as well as to the future. This involves three main elements.

(1) First, God's unswerving purpose in face of fallen humanity is the ultimate redemption of humanity through Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul sets this forth very clearly in our text, speaking, to quote Dr. Weymouth again, of 'the purpose which God has cherished in his own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ.'

¶ If we want to know what is God's destiny for humanity, think of the place the head occupies in relation to the body. First, the head is intimately connected with the body in all its parts. In the head is the brain, which is the centre of all the voluntary nerve system of the body. The brain is like a telephone exchange. Just as all telephones are linked up at the exchange, so all nerves are linked up at the brain. And so, too, when Christ is really the head of humanity, every element of mankind will be linked up with all the rest through Him. None will be ignorant of Him or out of touch with Him or incapable of communion with Him. Next, the head commands the body. The brain restrains the limbs and also sets them in motion. The message travels from the head to the hand, and the hand must obey. The head says, 'Take a pen,' and the hand takes the pen. The head says, 'Write,' and the hand obediently writes. So when Christ is Head of the race, His will will be done—as in heaven, so on earth. The love of Christ, the humility of Christ, the self-forgetfulness of Christ, the saving grace of Christ, will flow into every part of humanity. War, cruelty, oppression, greed, social monstrosities of all sorts, will come to an end. In the third place, the head is the medium of communion. Our eyes, lips, and the expression of our face, give messages to others, while our eyes and ears receive their messages in return. So Christ, the Head of the race, will be the medium of mankind's communion with God. Through Christ we shall hear and see Him. Through Christ we shall make our wants and our worship known to God.[1]

(2) From purpose to action is but a step, and Christianity declares that in all the history of humanity God has been at work preparing for the accomplishment of His purpose. It is one thing to form a purpose, it is another to carry it out. It is one thing for Cecil Rhodes to conceive the idea of a railway from Cairo to the Cape, it is another thing to carry that idea into operation. It is one thing for a young man to make up his mind to be a poet; it is another thing to write real poetry. All depends on the resources on the one hand and the obstacles on the other.

God's purpose of redeeming mankind through Christ could not swiftly and easily be put into practice. Why? Other purposes of God are realized inevitably and immediately. Never a snowflake falls but its crystals are perfect, without blemish. Never a wave breaks upon the shore but its curves obey to perfection the laws of gravity and motion. But the human spirit is different from these things. It is capable of resistance to God. Man can set up his purpose to thwart even omnipotence. God may say, 'Thou shalt not,' but man is capable of answering, 'I will.' And but for one fact God would be helpless, face to face with man's resistance. That one fact is time. Time is on God's side. Time, strange and mysterious thing, is God's resource to

[1] Newton H. Marshall.

win through man's opposition. And through the centuries Christianity asserts that God has been at work preparing for the redemption of mankind.

The whole process, then, that resulted in building up the Roman Empire was part of God's purposeful preparation for the redemption of mankind in Christ. And what is true of civilization and political progress is also true of the religions of the world. Every one of them prepares the mind of men to a certain point for the acceptance of Christ. Of course, seeing that they are religions constructed by fallen men, they contain elements opposed, and in some cases strongly opposed, to our Lord. Nevertheless, they are up to a point preparatory for Jesus. Every evangelist or apostle who went to the Gentiles found people who could understand what he said, because of what they had already learnt from their own religions. Asiatics and Romans alike understood at once what Paul and John said when they spoke about the need for propitiation. Their religions had taught them much about this. The Christian preachers did not have to invent a word for God. In every language the word was there already, established and understood, because of the religions with which the people were familiar. And so with other ideas—prayer, punishment, worship, the soul, holiness, revelation, angels—these and a host of others God had been teaching to the nations by means of their own religions for all the generations, and thereby preparing men for Christ.

¶ Robert Spurgeon, late of Barisal, in India, told me what a great help many of the notions of Hinduism—that basest of all religions—were to the Christian teacher. As an instance, he said that the missionary had only to say that Jesus was the Son of Man for a flood of light to fall into the soul of the Hindoo. Why? Because the word 'son' meant for him also 'saviour.' When a son is born to a Hindoo, he praises and thanks God, for his religion teaches him that a son is a redeeming gift from God, and saves him from many evils. So He who is the Son of Man is readily believed to be the Saviour of man.[1]

[1] Newton H. Marshall.

(3) But this is not merely a matter of history. When we talk of God's preparation we are speaking of what is going on now, and has been going on, for the benefit of every one of us. The history of each individual soul is the history in little of the whole race. What has happened to mankind through ages of history happens to every one of us through the few years of our life. We come into the world, and when the opportunity comes, sooner or later, the little child falls into sin and takes his place in the ranks of fallen humanity. That is so with every one of us. But again, as with the race so with the individual. As soon as we have fallen—or rather, long before we fell—God prepares for our redemption. We find in ourselves tendencies that urge us towards Christ. All round us, in the home, in the school, in society, in literature, are forces from God that seek to prepare us for full restoration in Christ. Not only all around us, but within us too. The natural forces pent up in the breast of every man are not apart from God, not opposed to God. They teach him wonder, awe in the presence of the Unknown, reverence in the presence of the high and holy, responsibility in face of his own powers, and a longing for a true guide and a true way of life. That is to say, God has made every man fit for his right destiny, and Himself is continually urging men, beckoning them, wooing them, persuading them, toward the heavenly life. There comes a time in our experience when we meet with Christ. That is the all-important moment. That is the crisis of our personal history, just as the crisis of mankind occurred when Jesus, risen from the dead, revealed Himself once more to those who had rejected Him.

¶ There is a little lake among the mountains—only a little lake, and few people ever pass by it or stop to look at it. But in it is reflected the reeds and mosses on its banks, the tall, gaunt fir-tree growing near, the steep rocks, the ice-crowned summit of the mountain, and beyond the vast blue of heaven. When the sun rises, its faint first beauty is mirrored in this lake. In half-an-hour all the glories of crimson and gold are there, too, and all through

the day the changing wonders of heaven are there in the lake. At night the stars, which swing myriads of miles away in measureless majesty, are also there, in the little lake. The infinite space is crushed into that cup of water. Such is the possibility of our souls. All God's labours from eternity are for us. All His prophets, teachers, religions, poets, civilizations, struggles, triumphs, glories, are ours. We are the heirs of God's preparations. His high thoughts and purposes may be realized in our bosoms. God grant it![1]

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea![2]

In Christ.

Eph. i. 10.—'All things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him.'

God's great purpose of unity is to be effected 'in Christ . . . even in him.' Bring all separated things within the influence of Christ, whose work it is to 'draw all men unto' Him, and they become inspired with life, and pervaded by new and inconceivable strength; and in the power of the common possession they are brought into happy and harmonious fellowship. The isolated members are filled with the energy of the Holy Spirit, and by the strength of that pervasive influence they become one. Christ creates unanimity by first of all creating magnanimity; He fills the individual member with His own Spirit, and so makes all the members of one mind. He gathereth together in one all things in Himself. Let us look at some of the scattered things which find their unity in Him.

1. Look at our own personal *self*. Here is a divided kingdom. It is full of sundered members and powers which often plunge the being into a state of civic insurrection, member fighting against member in dire hostility. There is distraction and division where there ought to be harmony. There is conscience, there is will, there is imagination, there is desire, there is all the varied agency of passion. And then there are the outer powers—all the means of expression by which we are endowed, the gift of speech, the language of gesture, and all the many agencies by which thought is conveyed from one to another. Then there are the senses, and along with these the hungers and thirsts and cravings of the flesh. All these many and varied capacities are often waging warfare in the life, and producing the discord of revolt.

All these things must be gathered together in one in Christ. The coming of the King into the riven being is the secret of unity. Before the conductor comes to lead the orchestra every member of the band appears to do as he likes. One instrument proclaims one note, and another another, and there is discord and confusion. But when the conductor appears, the individual wills of the members are subdued to his own, and the one will controls the host. And when the Lord Christ comes into man's being, where every instrument has been playing for itself without any co-operation with the rest, and has produced jarring discords and pains, the strength of His own controlling purpose restrains the individual rioting, and brings the disorderly orchestra into fellowship and harmony. But the illustration is imperfect and inadequate: when Christ comes into the life He not only controls, He pervades the instrumentalists! His Spirit enters the conscience and Christianizes it; it enters the will and Christianizes it; it Christianizes the emotions, the affections, the senses, and Christianizes even the flesh. The Lord Christ cannot dwell in human bodies without the very bodies themselves being sanctified. 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?' And so when He comes into the life distraction gives place to unity, discord becomes harmony, and the once alien powers kneel together round a

[1] Newton H. Marshall.
[2] Oliver Wendell Holmes.

common head. He gathereth 'together in one all things in Christ.'

2. Turn to the sphere of the *home*. How frequently home is a divided kingdom, its members severed by deep gulfs, living in a spirit of unlovely isolation. There are many things in home life to create division. There are differences in body. Some members of the family are physically strong and others are physically weak. One member has nerves like steel, while another has nerves like the tender strings of a violin. One is comparatively coarse-grained and is untroubled by trifling shocks; another is finely organized and trembles sensitively like an Arab steed. Where there are these differences in bodily constitution there is abundant scope for misunderstanding and strife. And then there are differences in temperament. One member is of the bilious temperament, and is possessed by strong passions. Another is lymphatic; life is heavy and flabby, and all its movements, vital, mental and volitional, are sleepy and sluggish. Another member is nervous and therefore irritable, alert and superfine in mind and body. A fourth is of the sanguine temperament, active and ardent, full of impulse, but perhaps lacking in tenacity. Where these differences of temperament prevail there is grave matter for the creation of alienation and division. Then there are differences in gifts. One member of the family has mechanical aptitudes and is little disposed to study; another has no taste for practical workmanship, he immures himself in books. A third member of the family is artistic and gives herself to music or to art, while a fourth has nothing of the artistic sense and is absorbed in purely domestic concerns. Here again the differences may make for cleavage.

The members of a family are like sundered units; how can they be 'gathered together'? All things must be 'gathered together in one in Christ.' The different members of the family must be Christ-ruled and Christ-pervaded. The temperament must be Christianized, the gifts must be sanctified, and in this common spirit the uniting fellowship will be found. Not that all individualities will be erased, and that many lives will be as indistinctive as so many billiard balls! When the Lord comes into the life the individualities are not suppressed; they are illumined and glorified. Christ is the Head of the family; scattered members find their communion in Him. The miracle is being worked every day; the coming of the Lord into the home and the possession by each of its members of the Spirit of Christ converts the home into heaven.

¶ It is not propriety nor outward perfectness by which we may know the Christian home first of all. It is the Christian spirit rather, the spirit of humility, the spirit of forgiveness, the spirit of readiness to be reconciled; it is the spirit of the self-effacingness and all-lovingness of the cross. The Fifty-first Psalm, the Beatitudes of Jesus, the Master's prayer on the cross, these are all tokens of that mind which ought to distinguish the Christian home.[1]

O happy home, where Thou art loved the dearest,
Thou loving Friend, and Saviour of our race,
And where among the guests there never cometh
One who can hold such high and honoured place!

O happy home, where each one serves Thee, lowly,
Whatever his appointed work may be,
Till every common task seems great and holy,
When it is done, O Lord, as unto Thee!

O happy home, where Thou art not forgotten
When joy is overflowing, full and free,
O happy home, where every wounded spirit
Is brought, Physician, Comforter, to Thee,—

Until at last, when earth's day's-work is ended,
All meet Thee in the blessèd home above,
From whence Thou camest, where Thou hast ascended,
Thy everlasting home of peace and love![2]

[1] R. Whitaker, *The Gospel at Work in Modern Life*, 61.

[2] E. J. P. Spitts (tr. Sarah L. Findlater).

3. It is the same if we turn to another sphere and contemplate the divisions of *society*. How great and deep are the dividing gulfs! There are social divisions separating men into rich and poor, into employers and employed. There are the gulfs created by culture, dividing society into the literate and the illiterate, the mentally dark and the mentally illumined. And there are the ecclesiastical gulfs separating men into sect and sect, and often placing them in fierce and relentless antagonism.

How shall all these scattered members become one, and co-operate in smooth and progressive fellowship? They can only be gathered together in one in Christ. Nothing else can fashion the unity. Legislation may arrange just relationships, but it can never create the spirit of love. Legislation may create juxtaposition; it is never creative of fellowship. And material forces may coerce, but they cannot inspire. And if these united and hostile members are to become one, the unifying minister must pervade the temper and the spirit, and the communion must be accomplished in the secret place. It is even so with the divided sects; we shall become one '*in Christ*,' not in the expression of common dogmas, not in the utterance of precisely similar creeds, and still less in the common observations of similar ceremonies, but one in devotion to a Person, in living fellowship and communion with the Christ.

Gather us in, Thou Love that fillest all,
Gather our rival faiths within Thy fold,
Rend each man's temple veil and bid it fall
That we may know that Thou hast been of old;
Gather us in.

Gather us in: we worship only Thee;
In varied names we stretch a common hand;
In diverse forms a common soul we see;
In many ships we seek one spirit-land;
Gather us in.

Each sees one colour of Thy rainbow-light,
Each looks upon one tint and calls it heaven;
Thou art the fulness of our partial sight;
We are not perfect till we find the seven;
Gather us in.

Thine is the mystic life great India craves,
Thine is the Parsee's sin-destroying beam,
Thine is the Buddhist's rest from tossing waves,
Thine is the empire of vast China's dream;
Gather us in.

Thine is the Roman's strength without his pride,
Thine is the Greek's glad world without its graves,
Thine is Judea's law with love beside,
The truth that censures and the grace that saves;
Gather us in.

Some seek a Father in the heavens above,
Some ask a human image to adore,
Some crave a spirit vast as life and love:
Within Thy mansions we have all and more;
Gather us in.[1]

4. But the unity is to be larger than the things 'on earth.' It is to be inclusive of the things 'which are in heaven and which are on earth.' We are to be all one in Christ! The pilgrim of time, toiling along the stony ways of earth, is one with the dweller in the unseen who contemplates his Master face to face! The Christian on this side the river, and the Christian who has crossed, are one. They drink at the same fountain, they commune with the same Lord, they draw their inspiration from the same Head. Death makes no division here. This is a beautiful and inspiring evangel, which takes away many of the pangs of bereavement, and leaves the blessedness of the deepest communion untouched and undisturbed.

So, when together in God's light we stand,
Thee shall I take, thee truly as thou art;
No parting meeting touch of lip or hand,—
No baffled agony of heart to heart:—

[1] G. Matheson, *Sacred Songs*, 36.

But as twin fires that on God's altar burn
And in the fragrance of one cloud ascend,
To its ordained fulfilment each shall turn,
Welcome its long desire, and apprehend.

And never more shall there be I or Thou
When we are one for ever,—thou and I.—
A DREAM,—*a dream that we have dreamt ere now,*
When we were lovers, love,—in times gone by.[1]

Christ the Hope of Humanity.

Eph. i. 9, 10.—'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.'

LET us pass by the many philosophical and historical and theological problems that are suggested by the text, and fasten upon the fundamental statement that is found in the last clause—the statement that in this fullness of the time God has summed up all things in Christ.

All serious-minded people are profoundly impressed with a sense of solemnity at the present condition of the world. Events have converged to a common crisis. Something has happened that has brought all the world to a standstill. There is a consciousness among all sorts of people that we have reached the end of a period, that we stand at the dawn of a new and apocalyptic day of the Lord. Nobody knows quite how it is going to come to pass. Nobody can gauge exactly the immediate issues of present conditions, but there is a feeling everywhere that a long stretch has been accomplished, that a new epoch is about to begin. Looking at life from whatever standpoint we choose, judging the conditions of the world by any ordinary standard, we see that men are conscious of a crisis, a challenge, a future that is incalculable but must of necessity be filled with momentous things. It is not simply that the war came and made a change in the world. The war itself was rather a product than the cause of this world-consciousness.

[1] J. D. Batten, *Poems*, 19.

1. We have come to the hour of crisis. There is one direction in which that fact is demonstrated. Organizations that for the last forty years have been trying to save the world without God, and especially without Christ, have come to the end of the day. Indeed, this is the midnight hour of the world. The midnight hour is the end of the day, but not yet the beginning of the new one. It does not belong to yesterday. It does not belong to to-morrow. At the end of the day you find the resources of the world are locked up. If ever you have been stranded at midnight you know about it. In the morning or afternoon it does not matter, but at midnight nobody is within reach or within sight. So it is the midnight hour of the world. The world is just a stranded pilgrim at the end of the day, homeless and shelterless. Men have come at the end of the day to the point of disillusionment and disappointment and a sense of need and of hunger. We have seen them in the last fifty years setting off with a flourish of trumpets and a waving of banners to save the world without Christ. At the end of the day they have come back with nothing to show but exploded theories and disappointing experiments.

What were some of these experiments?

(1) They were going to save the world by *sanitation.* We all believe in sanitation. There is not a town in England that is not a disgrace to our twentieth century civilization. We need to rebuild England. Thirty-five or forty years ago we started out to do it. A very distinguished Free Churchman wrote a couple of letters to an important weekly religious paper on 'The Coming Revival.' He said that in the coming revival we should not send into the city slum an evangelist carrying a Sankey hymn-book and quoting John iii. 16. The writer, pouring out some of the vitriolic sentences of which he was a master, urged that that was folly; it was not the evangelist who was wanted, it was

the sanitary engineer. Well, the plumber has been and has come back. He has come back at the end of the day, and what does he say regarding the effort to save the world by sanitation? Let the President of the Medical Officers of Health make reply. He says they have nothing to show but disappointment and failure. Seeking the explanation, he says they have failed because they have not taken sufficient account of what he calls the psychic element of the sanitary problem. This simply means that there is a soul in the sewer and there is a spiritual element at the root of the problem of the slum. So they come back knowing they must re-adjust their theories and their programme, and the conclusion of the whole matter is that the plumber says, 'I can do nothing until you have sent the evangelist.'

(2) They were going to save the world by *better economic conditions.* Everybody believes that economic conditions need to be re-adjusted, if not revolutionized. We have come to the end of the day, and even the Labour Party leaders—or the best among them—are asking the leaders of the Churches, Why have we failed, and what is the explanation of our disappointment in the last thirty or forty years? The daily Press, and the magazine literature, and all the leading thinkers and teachers of the day have come to the conclusion that nobody can do anything for the world as it is except Jesus Christ. That is not the Christian man's conclusion; it has been his faith all along. It is the conviction of the world.

There is no hope for civilization unless Jesus Christ can be brought to bear in His moral and spiritual power upon the condition of the world. We have been fighting to end war, and we have been fighting ever since. It won't need many more wars to bring to an end all civilization. If Jesus does not save the world, nobody else can. That is not simply the conviction of preachers; it is the deliberate and reasoned conclusion of the publicists, and the philosophers, and the scientists, and the politicians and the reformers. Our answer to the world in its challenge is that Christ is the Saviour of the world; that there is no other name under heaven whereby the world can be saved.

2. Men say to us, What authority have you for saying that Jesus Christ is equal to every problem of the midnight hour? Our answer is the answer of the text. God has summed up all things in Christ. That is the biggest statement in the Bible concerning Christ. It is the final claim made for Him. The word 'summed up' is the common word for 'totality.' Five and four are nine, and three are twelve, and eight are twenty. The twenty includes the five, and the four, and the three and the eight, and sums them all up. That is what Jesus Christ does for the world. It takes twenty shillings to make a sovereign, but every one of the twenty shillings is in the sovereign. The teaching of the passage is that as a golden sovereign stands for twenty shillings so does Christ stand in relation to all things in heaven and all things upon earth. He sums them all up. He brings them all into one. They are all included in Him, and completed in Him, and consummated in Him. Now Jesus Christ is the only Person who ever lived for whom such a claim has been made. We speak of a man summing up a movement, or summing up a period, or even summing up a dispensation, but no man ever lived of whom it was seriously claimed that he summed up all things.

We may begin to apply to that statement all kinds of tests. Let us mention a few important ones concerning this crisis and the matter of our own personal salvation and the philosophy of our own life.

(1) Jesus sums up *all truth.* We have been greatly interested in truth in the last forty years. We have been exploring its origins, tracing its processes, and, to the astonishment of some people, truth has been found in unexpected places. There is truth in false religions, and truth in false philosophies—truth everywhere. So they come back to tell us we have claimed too much for Jesus, and too much for our religion. We have never said that Jesus had the monopoly of truth. Nobody claims that for Him. What is claimed

for Jesus is that in Him is the consummation of truth. He is not a teacher among many. He is *the* Truth. All light comes from the sun, whether we get it out of the sky or out of a coal-pit. Jesus did not say He was a light; He said He was *the* Light. In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The teaching of Jesus Christ has been before the world for two thousand years, and He has yet to be convicted of the first error. He never made any mistakes. The people who have interpreted Him have made plenty. He was the only man who ever lived who never said 'perhaps,' never balanced probabilities. Jesus Christ is God's last word. He is never a back number. He is never out of date. When we have solved our last problem He will still be ahead of us. At the midnight hour of the world all sorts and conditions of men are at the door of the Church asking for the Christian interpretation of life. The men whose brains are best worth trusting tell us there is no answer but in Jesus. There is no problem in the world that would not be solved were it in His hands.

(2) He sums up *all humanity*. That is why He is the only Saviour of the world. He is not simply Prophet and Messiah, He is the Son of Man. He is not only the representative man, He is the all-inclusive, universal Man. Each man who comes to Jesus—what does he find? He finds himself. That is the supreme discovery. A man never finds himself until He comes to Jesus. He finds himself in Him because he is in Him, and when he is complete and perfected at last and stands before the throne his perfection will still be in Him.

(3) He sums up *all saving and redeeming grace*. When we find Jesus we find our salvation, not because of what we think or believe about Him, but because we find Him. All sorts of people come to Jesus. He is the Saviour of sinners without adjectives. He is the Saviour the world needs.

¶ I was once conducting a service when a note was handed to me which told me that fifty men had come who were agnostics, atheists, socialists, communists, anarchists—all sorts. They did not want to hear me preach. They wanted me to tell them why an intelligent man like myself was a Christian. I put my sermon in my pocket. For forty minutes I told them why I was a Christian. I invited them to meet me for discussion. About twenty-five of them met me in a room at the back of the chapel. Our meeting began at nine o'clock and did not close until three o'clock in the morning. They asked me questions by the score, and I answered them as well as I was able. In the early morning one man got up and said some of them had to go to work. I said, 'Before you go, there is one question I would like to ask you. You have asked me hundreds. Now, you have argued that if human nature only had a chance it would be all right. You say, give us better conditions, and see what human nature can do. But if you don't know, I know there are hundreds and hundreds of people in this city and every city in the world of whom it is not true. Their bodies are rotten, their hearts are corrupt, their tastes are depraved, their souls are paralysed. They are the men you call the "bottom dog." They don't want a philosophy, they want a Saviour. I want to know what you propose to do with that lot.' The leader put his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat and looked at me, and after a pause he said, 'Well, I'd send 'em to you.' 'Why to me?' I asked. 'Oh,' he said, 'I don't believe there is any chance for these poor devils, but if there is, you've got it. If the Christ you preach can't save 'em, nobody can.' Is not that what Nietzsche said of the gospel of Jesus Christ—that it was the gospel of all the 'poor devils'? The New Testament does not put it in that way. It calls it the gospel for sinners. It is the only gospel, and He is the only Saviour, and He is mighty to save.[1]

[1] S. Chadwick.

The Two Inheritances.

Eph. i. 11.—'In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.'

Eph. i. 18.—'The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'

1. *Our inheritance in God.*—It is impossible to exhaust this theme, for we are made heirs of all the unsearchable riches in Christ. But notice—

(1) We are made alive from the dead. The Apostle says, in the second chapter and first verse, 'And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.' In the fifth verse he repeats it: 'Even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ.' We who once were dead in trespasses and sins are made heirs of God; and, in order that we might be heirs, God begins by creating us anew in Christ Jesus, just as though He had taken dead elements from the earth, and made a man anew 'out of the dust of the ground.' Sin had slain us, and we were dead to God, and God had first to make us alive in Christ that we might be able to receive the eternal inheritance.

(2) Then, having made us alive, He took us into His family, and He gave us what Paul calls, in the fifth verse of the first chapter, 'the adoption of sons.' 'Adoption-of-sons' is one word in the Greek, and means sonship, or the place and the privilege of a son. When we were dead He made us alive, and then, having made us alive, He gave us the place of sons, for who could properly be an heir but a son? God does not take an alien and will His property to that alien. When He makes an heir He first makes him a son. The alien is put into His family of grace, and, of course, becomes an heir because he is a son. Everything involved in being a son is represented by that word, 'sonship.'

(3) Another wonder about this rich grace is that, having made us sons, as already suggested, He made us heirs—'In whom we have received an inheritance.' Among men a child ordinarily gets the property only when the father or the testator dies. As God never dies, we are come into our inheritance *jointly with* the ever-living God Himself. He does not bestow the universe upon us—that is too little for Him to give—He gives *Himself*. All the wisdom, all the knowledge, all the power, all the love, all the blessedness that is in God become ours in Jesus Christ; and, together with God, everything that God owns. This grand thought is too great for our apprehension—that the humblest believer is going to share the very nature of God, which is the first and most glorious element in the inheritance—going to share the throne, the sceptre, the crown of Jesus Christ, going to share the universe that God owns; that is to say, there is nothing in God or His possessions that is not to contribute to the everlasting blessedness of the sons and heirs of God.

(4) Another remarkable fact is this—that, having made us alive, having given us the place of sons, and made us heirs, He pays us, in advance of the full redemption of our inheritance, the interest or revenue of the estate: 'in whom'—that is, in Christ—'also, after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest'—that is, the foretaste—'of our inheritance until'—that is, this side of—'the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.'

A minor, before his majority, receives, by the appointment of the testator, the revenue from the estate. Stocks are invested, land is rented, buildings are tenanted, and the income from all these investments, gathered in by the executors and administrators, is dealt out to prospective heirs, during their minority, for their support, education, and enjoyment. And so, although we have not come to our majority yet, and have not entered fully upon our inheritance, we get the earnest or foretaste of it; the joys of heaven are in anticipation brought down to earth. The Apostle, labouring to express this thought, mixes up two figures in one sentence. He says, 'We are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of the inheritance.' The first figure is taken from the common practice of confirming

a document by a seal; and the second figure is taken from the practice of paying over to the minor the revenue of the estate before his majority. God says: 'You were dead. I made you alive. You were an alien. I made you a son. You had no possession in me. I made you an heir.' Here is the document which is the title clear to mansions in the skies, and the Holy Ghost puts on that document his broad seal, and affixes to it the stamp of God; and if you ever doubt that you have an inheritance, look at that title and see the seal of the Holy Ghost.

2. *God's inheritance in us.*—The most glorious part of our theme is yet to be presented, and that is, 'the riches of the glory of *God's inheritance in the saints.*' This is certainly among the most stupendous thoughts within the pages of the New Testament—that God should regard us as worthy to be made an inheritance for Himself! See what glimpses the Apostle gives us into this subject.

(1) In the first place, he teaches us that God *buys* or purchases us for His inheritance, that He redeems His inheritance by precious blood. In the fifth chapter, Paul tells us that Christ 'gave himself for us as an offering to God for a sweet smelling savour.' When God looked down on us we were slaves of sin, condemned by the law, victims of death and hell; and He first gave His own Son to buy us out of our bondage and captivity and spiritual death that He might introduce us into the privileges of the sons of God, and find in us an inheritance.

(2) Then, after this purchase, He proceeds to *make us anew* in Christ Jesus; that is, to make us fit to be His own inheritance. In the second chapter and tenth verse we are told, 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' The original word there means a *poem,* as though the Divine Artist were writing a poem full of the rhyme and rhythm of heavenly music, and took us for the theme of the poem. We are His workmanship, His artistic product. God does not make anything imperfect; when He makes us anew in Christ Jesus that means perfection for us in the future life.

(3) As He bought us for an inheritance, and reconstructs us in Christ, He *carries the work to perfection.* He sends to us afflictions, and they seem to tear us to pieces with sorrow and grief. God is only stripping off the rotten boards and shingles, and taking out the dead timbers. He is only remodelling and improving His own inheritance; and because He loves us so much He takes such infinite pains with the old building to put in place of its corruption the glorious renovations of the Holy Spirit. That is why God deals with His own disciples oftentimes in a very painful way. He is seeking to make them completely over into the likeness of His dear Son.

(4) Again, He who buys us for an inheritance, and makes us anew, and perfects us by the discipline of His grace *comes and dwells in us.* He has built His house for a dwelling; and He is going to be the inhabitant Himself. 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you? Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.' Are we not right in saying that this thought is unsurpassed for grandeur in the New Testament? God buys us from sin, delivers us from captivity and condemnation, then He makes us over in Christ Jesus by the power of His grace, then He disciplines us by sorrow and suffering, and trial and temptation, until He has perfected the building. Then He comes and dwells in it, and makes it a habitation of God.

(5) And so, finally, He *glorifies it.* He could not dwell in it without glorifying it. But, at last He is going to take this body of ours and make it like unto the body of Christ. He is going to take this soul of ours and wash it clean, saving it not only from the penalty, but from the power and dominion and presence of sin also, and make it a fit place for His glory to shine in, and for His glory to shine through.

In the fourth chapter of Zechariah, we read of the wonderful candlestick, with the lamps that are burning in testimony, on its branches. But when in Revelation we get a last glimpse of that golden candlestick, the *lamps* are turned to *stars*. What were lamps on earth, have become stars in heaven, and these stars are held in the right hand of Jesus Christ. We think of Daniel, the twelfth chapter and the second verse, 'They that be teachers (margin) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.' If God takes these pains to perfect the building while we are on earth, what will be its perfection when it is transplanted to the skies; when the last sign of sin and imperfection disappears, and when the light of a candle, and even sunshine itself is superfluous, because His glory lightens it, and shines through the window with supernal splendour![1]

Sealed.

Eph. i. 13.—'In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that (RV "the") Holy Spirit of promise.'

There are different purposes for which a seal may be used. Stamped on documents, such as wills, deeds, bonds, it carries assurance that the document is genuine and authoritative. A seal may also be used to keep a thing inviolate, to prevent its being tampered with. Darius sealed the den into which Daniel had been cast, and the Chief Priests sealed the Sepulchre in which the body of Jesus had been laid. A third use of the seal is to attest the ownership of an article. The same seal may serve each or all of these purposes. Here the thought of possession predominates (*cf.* ver. 4); but it can scarcely be separated from the other two. The witness of the Holy Spirit marks men out as God's *purchased right* in Christ (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). In that very fact it guards them from evil and wrong (iv. 30), while it ratifies their Divine sonship (Gal. iv. 6) and guarantees their personal share in the promises of God (2 Cor. i. 20-22).

¶ Mr. Kennedy Williamson, in his vivid fashion, helps us to understand this metaphor. In his recent book, *The Uncarven Timbers,* we find this:

'Among stacks of timber on the wide wharves, with black-sailed feluccas rocking in the river at the quayside, life to the small boy was an enchantment. Less than a mile from the open sea, the city which was his home, on the banks of the Cnydus, had a very paradise of dockland, where traders clad in strange garments and jabbering strange speech, bargained and chaffered with the local merchants. Those stacks of timber were a wonderland for hide-and-seek, and when limbs grew tired, there were nooks among the piled logs, and eyries high up on the bales of merchandise, from which the young adventurers could watch the traffic of the wharf. Loggers floated downstream on their rafts, and lumbermen in their barges; and sometimes close beside the hidden audience, deals in timber would be struck and the ceremonial of bargain and barter enacted beneath their very eyes.

Here, look you, is a buyer ready for a big deal in timber that has been floated down from the distant forests. The fragrant wood lies piled in lots along the wharf. The consignment will cost a pretty figure, far more than the wary buyer has brought with him in cash. None the less, a bargain can be struck on the strength of an earnest. A fraction of the whole cost is paid over, the residue to be settled later; and that pledge-money gives finality to the bargain. No rival merchant by bidding more can wrest the purchase from the buyer. The deposit makes it his beyond all cavil.

But the timber that has been bought will need to lie for many a day before it can be used in joinery or workshop. It must be seasoned until all the warp and shrinkage have gone from it. And so the owner sets his seal upon the timbers, branding them with his private mark, and thereafter, whether they lie on the wharf, or be floated downstream to another port, that token will be respected by

[1] A. T. Pierson, *The Heart of the Gospel*, 230ff.

all loggers, and the wood that bears it will be acknowledged as his property.

So the small boy who has been listening all agog to the transaction has been initiated into two customs of the wharfinger—the earnest and the seal. Years later that small boy wrote letters to the churches, and two remarks of his are strangely meaningful. To the folk at Corinth he said—God 'hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,' and to Ephesus he wrote—'Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.' These words have all the vividness of a childhood's scene. Paul was recalling the wharf and those beloved timber-stacks, and the ceremonial of seal and earnest.[1]

1. The seal here, then, is God's stamp to mark us as belonging properly to Him. It is by the impress of His Spirit that 'the Lord knoweth them that are his.' That impress is not ours by nature, still less by happy accident; it has to be placed upon us, and it has to be received by faith. The die comes down, and leaves its stamp on the softened wax, or melted gold, or moist clay; and afterwards they bear that likeness because they were prepared to receive it. Just so, when the love of God in Christ gets into a man's heart, and melts him down in contrition and gratitude, the Spirit descends on his life, and henceforward it bears at least the rudiments of the higher image. Different souls, of course, take different parts of the impression with varied clearness. One will exhibit a Christlike love; another will burn and blaze with fearless devotion; a third will reveal a deep delight in spiritual knowledge. But, however individual parts may vary, the general outline is fixed there once for all, as the basis of that which is to follow; and it is the task of prayer, self-denial, and hard work to fill up the initial sketch, and bring out each feature in the needed balance and proportion.

[1] P. 115.

O thou who bear'st the Seal of Christ our Lord,
His Image and His Signature ador'd,
By Him the Covenant is sign'd and seal'd,
By Him the Promise of the Gift reveal'd.
His Spirit is His Impress, His dear Hand
Has written on thy heart His high command;
His lips have join'd thy lips to do His part,
His Hands thy hands, His loving Heart thy heart,
Do thou thy part, give Him thyself, thy best,
For Him thy day of toil, from Him thy rest.

2. But the seal not only indicates the ownership of that on which it is placed, it makes the ownership visible. It is so placed that it may be seen.

(1) *It is seen by God.*—Its very first impression marks the soul as His, redeemed at a great cost, and now appropriated for His own possession. To that, however, we have to add the care His love expends in later days to cut the stamp deeper, to work the image of Christ into the character so indelibly that it stays there, and no rain-storms of temptation, or pain, or death will ever wash it out. The ancient story tells that when creation had been finished, God saw everything He had made, and behold, it was very good; but that deep creative joy in the morning twilight of the world was but a faint premonition of the diviner joy of the new creation, when the Father for ever claims and authenticates as His own those who were dead and are alive again, who were lost and are found.

(2) *It is seen by ourselves.*—'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.' There is such a thing as the inward unfaltering testimony assuring us that, however unworthy, we belong to God. He will not leave His people in suspense for ever as to life's great issues. He has means and ways of satisfying our longing for certainty; He has proofs which can be furnished to the inward consciousness, bringing all our doubts to rest.

¶ The doctrine of 'assurance' through the witness of the Spirit is an integral part of religion. Scripture teaches it; reason de-

mands it; the creeds of all the Christian Churches assert it. It is incredible that when God's love in Christ has established its empire in the believing heart, and sin is forgiven, and all the ties of the spiritual order are restored, this stupendous change should be unrealized. It is incredible that God should conceal His grace; that it can be His will that His pardoned child should live under the shadow of a lie.

But this gracious truth was, in Wesley's day, one of the lost doctrines of Christianity. It was in the Thirty-nine Articles, but it had faded out of human memory. It was no longer realized, nor even expected, in human experience. It had become a mere incredibility. Its rediscovery and reassertion are part of the great service Methodism has rendered to the general Christian faith. This is what Wesley says of it:—

'I observed, many years ago, that it is hard to find words in the language of men to explain the deep things of God. Indeed, there are none that will adequately express what the Spirit of God works in His children. But perhaps one might say (desiring any who are taught of God to correct, soften, or strengthen the expression), by the "testimony of the Spirit" I mean an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that "Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me," that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God. After twenty years' further consideration, I see no cause to retract any part of this. Neither do I conceive how any of these expressions may be altered so as to make them more intelligible. Meantime, let it be observed, I do not mean hereby that the Spirit of God testifies this by any outward voice; no, nor always by an inward voice, although He may do this sometimes. Neither do I suppose that He always applies to the heart (though He often may) one or more texts of Scripture. But He so works upon the soul by His immediate influence, and by a strong, though inexplicable operation, that the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm; the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that all his "iniquities are forgiven, and his sins covered".'[1]

(3) *It is seen by others.*—In His interview with Nicodemus Jesus said that the action of the Spirit on a human life resembles the blowing of the wind. Now there is much about the wind which is mysterious, and which even science has not wholly mastered; but when we go out in a breeze there is one thing as to which we have not the least uncertainty; and that is whether or not it is blowing. The sensations produced by it, the results left in its track, are unmistakable. So when the Spirit moves and swells in the lives of men, filling all the sails and urging onwards, other men can see it. It has manifestations that tell their own tale. Let it once get inside a man's heart, and it cannot be hid. When men watch a hot, passionate nature learning the gentleness and courtesy of Jesus; or the moral coward putting on the armour of God and fighting his battles fearlessly; or the grasping and covetous conquering the lust of money, and sharing it liberally with others; or the implacable and unforgiving granting pardon to a neighbour, and asking it in turn, then they know by instinct that such things point to some vast impelling force. Grapes are not to be gathered from thorns, nor figs from thistles. And whatever name the onlookers may give it, whatever theories they may indulge as to how it got there, they perceive somehow that its origin is holy and that it is of God. A Christian of the New Testament pattern is as noticeable by his fellows as a white man among black men, or a civilized man among savages.

¶ Was there anyone in distress in the neighbourhood? My father was at his side as a matter of course—so much a matter of course that the neighbours as a rule no more thought of thanking him than of thanking the sun for shining. A stranger farmer's boy is squeezed between the shafts of the waggon and the wall. It is my father who watches him dying in the

[1] W. H. Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century*, 428.

loft above the stable: the farmer is sleeping in his own bed. The news must be gently broken to the boy's mother. My father walks, some thirteen or fourteen miles each way, to Rhyl to tell her. A drunken and surly and little-liked Scottish shepherd dies in his remote cottage. Mother, just to let me see, urges against my father's going to the funeral. When he insisted that there might be no one there to lift the corpse, she replied, 'Well! that is not *your* affair. He has left you sufficiently in the lurch already, for his debts will never be paid.' My father yields for the moment. But the scene is soon repeated; and matters end by my father tossing his leather apron to one side, washing his face, putting on his Sunday clothes, taking his workman with him, and attending the funeral. He returns home very happy: the most beautiful sample of a gentle humanity in all the land.

But the crowning example of the beauty of his character came to my knowledge in quite an incidental way. Our next-door neighbour, a wealthy and most stingy shop-keeper, was dying of consumption. Day after day he sent for my father to sit with him in the parlour and amuse him. It was often difficult for him to go, for some one or another was clamouring for his boots; but he never once refused. On his arrival, the invalid would call out of the parlour to the housekeeper, 'Ellen Owens! bring a chair out of the kitchen for Elias Jones to sit on.' So a wooden chair was brought in, placed amongst the vulgar horse-hair chairs beside the mahogany table, and father sat in it never pretending that he had seen and felt the insult. The sick old miser was not worthy to tie my father's shoestrings, and I have not repented of the inscription I placed on my father's grave-stone applying to him what was said of 'the wisdom that is from above': 'First pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits'; for such, in truth, my father always was.[1]

[1] Sir Henry Jones, *Old Memories*, 43.

3. A seal is not affixed to a useless thing. The great seal of a nation is not used for an unimportant document. So God's great seal of grace indicates great reality and worth in those on whom it is impressed. A human spirit is essentially so great a thing that the whole world would not be enough to give in exchange for it. But a human spirit *with God's grace in it*, a man whose heart contains gracious affections and holy principles and is sealed of God by His Spirit, of that He says in effect: 'This work of mine is so rare and precious that I must not leave it exposed to the tempests and trials of the world without some indication of its worth.' And so He puts on it His great seal of the Spirit, and tells the man himself, and others too, in so far as they can be made to understand it, that the very richest and most valued part of all His earthly property is His own work of grace in living men.

To compare the 'kingdom of God within us' with anything material were quite beside the whole question; but if you compare it with other things of the higher and better kind—things mental and moral among men—you will find that it is peerless and alone. Shakespeare's noblest inspirations are not equal (in themselves) to a Christian's thoughts when he is thinking 'in the Spirit.' A philosopher's clearest distinctions, his best considered principles, are not equal to a Christian's practical discernings of good and evil. A soldier's greatest achievements in planning a campaign or fighting a battle are not so good as those lowlier victories which are won every day by the followers of Jesus Christ in the fields of common life, and are registered by the angels in the heavenly places. And all the loves and links of home and social life, although these are very precious and dear, are yet far inferior to the love which lifts up the soul to Christ, and makes an unseen place our real and eternal home. A human spirit in the grace of God—that is, in real goodness—is the noblest spectacle on which the sun looks down: it is the one thing that God seals.

¶ Britain puts a garrison into her valued frontier positions, the stronger the more she values them; and just so, the presence of

God's Spirit, come down to garrison and keep our hearts, betokens how great store He sets by even the least and frailest life. And when the day comes on which the judgment is set, and the books are opened, and each soul by the laws of the spiritual universe goes to its own place, what the Father will seek for, and rejoice to find, will be just this seal of His own Spirit, imprinted by His own hand long before in the days of earth.[1]

The Earnest of the Inheritance.

Eph. i. 13, 14.—'The Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.'

THE gift of the Spirit, besides being a seal which marked those who received it as belonging to God, was also, as a seal of *sonship,* an earnest or pledge of a future *inheritance.* 'If children, then heirs.' In time the believers in Christ shall come into the full possession of the inheritance of sons of God.

The earnest is the soldier's shilling, the bit of turf by which the purchaser takes possession of his estate, the wages given at the beginning of the bargain. It is part of the wages, part of the estate, part of the payment—at once a sample of the bulk, and a pledge that all the rest is to come. That is to say, the likeness of God that is wrought in our hearts by God's Spirit is itself at once our best information as to what the inheritance is like and our surest guarantee that the inheritance will one day be ours.

¶ The earnest is an institution of commerce which may be traced in many parts of the world. The Greek word that Paul used was borrowed from the Phœnicians, who were, *par excellence,* the traders of the ancient world. We know that in the first century of the Christian Church the word was in common usage as a business term. Documents of the period have been dug up in the deserts of late years, and among papers found in the city of Oxyrhynchus there is a letter of the first century in which the writer, one Horus, says: 'As regards Lampon the mousecatcher, I gave him, as earnest-money on your account, eight drachmas to catch the mice while they are with young.' The word here is Paul's word.

We have another letter, from the mayor of a village to one, Aurelius Theon, who seems to have had an entertainment bureau. The writer is arranging for the hire of two dancing-girls for a forthcoming festival. He suggests that they should receive 'By way of hire 36 drachmas daily, and by way of payment for the whole period three artabas of wheat and 15 couples of delicacies, and for their conveyance down and back again, three asses. And of this they have received . . . drachmas by way of earnest-money, to be reckoned by you in the price.' Here again the word used is Paul's word. Strangely enough, this same word that Paul used appears in Modern Greek with a different meaning. The participle of the verb is used to mean a betrothed girl, and the noun formed from the verb means an engagement ring. But the root-meaning is still there, for the ring is a pledge and token of the good with which the donor will endow her when the wedding has taken place, and so in Modern Greek an engaged girl is 'one who has received an earnest.' Exactly the same word-history may be traced in English also. Wycliffe's translation of the passage in Corinthians is 'a wedde of the spirit.' To *wed* was first of all simply to make a pledge. Anything given as a pledge was called a wedde. Then the word came to be applied to a certain specially momentous pledge, and to *wed* came to mean to marry.

Similarly, in Scotch we have the term 'arles,' used especially of the earnest-money paid to an employee at the moment of his being engaged, as a pledge of the wages that he will receive at the end of his first period of service. In *Redgauntlet* Scott says, 'He had refused the devil's arles'; in *The Abbot,* 'Catharine broke up housekeeping before you had taken arles in her service.'

So in Phœnicia, Egypt, Greece, and in modern countries too, we find traces of the 'earnest.' It was a familiar and a widespread institution. And this idea St. Paul takes and

[1] H. R. Mackintosh, *Life on God's Plan,* 96.

applies to the great theme under treatment. In the gift of the Holy Spirit, he says, God has given us something as arles, as earnest-money. It is the instalment from the greater inheritance which will one day be ours, a foretaste of the greater riches from His treasury. If you will, it is the betrothal ring, which is pledge of the coming union.[1]

1. Those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ have an earnest; they have it in their heart, shining out into their lives; and it is the presence of the Spirit. And, like other earnests, these two qualities distinguish it—it furnishes a certainty of that which is coming, and it reveals its character.

(1) First, it speaks with assurance of the future. An earnest that was an earnest of nothing would be a poor mockery, with no more significance than one half of a clasp, or the broken segment of a noble arch. And if God has been enabling us to walk in fellowship with Himself; if He has been making prayer a strength and a delight to us; if He has been changing our conceptions of things and their values down to the very bottom, so that we esteem what is Christlike and eternal and despise the low and base and mean; if the thought of God's love and God's perfect holiness has become a satisfaction and refreshment until we could not bear to live without Him—that is itself the presence of His Spirit within us, and we may be sure that the blessedness of it is not going to stop when we leave this world. God would not put us off with an inheritance like that. He would not train us to the enjoyment of His love and communion in order to rob us of it at the last. Neither love nor joy nor peace, which are the Spirit's choicest fruits, can ripen fully amid the frosts and scanty sunshine of a world like this; but never would they be permitted by our Father to attain even their present beauty or strength, unless He had meant to train them to a complete expansion somewhere else. Every believer has the assurance in his own heart that these things are so. And thus the Spirit is a Spirit of promise in this sense also, that its light shines across the black gulf of death, and reveals the heritage beyond.

(2) Then, besides that, our present experience supplies an index to the quality and character of that which is to come. We cannot judge of the magnitude of an object from a pattern, but we can judge of its nature. Even so, though 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him,' yet in faith we know that a world, a life, a being is in front of us which has for its inward content just the perfected fullness of the same Spirit that here is ours to purify and sustain. One glancing sunbeam, shot over a cloud, tells on the darkest day what kind of glory is up there above the mists; and the faintest light in a sinner's heart, evoked by the Spirit's action and kindled by the love of Jesus Christ, foretells by its intrinsic character what God has yet in store for him. Goodness, patience, kindness, pity, love—they will be the same in heaven as on earth, only consummated; and there as here they will take their glory from the Lord Jesus Christ. If we cannot forecast the particulars of that eternal life, yet we can foretaste, in the Spirit's consecrating presence, its nobleness and its bliss.

2. The promise of the inheritance is also an actual commencement—an earnest of its future possession. Now, this inheritance of spiritual life—the unseen kingdom redeemed for us by Christ—consists of three great elements: Love, Power, Blessedness. We have to illustrate how each of these is given by the Spirit now, and yet how each is at once a promise and an earnest of the future.

(1) *Love.*—Love is at once the firm conviction of God's love to us, and the answering love of the soul to Him. Such love robes life in splendour. It brings the glory of Heaven into the soul. We know how it is an earnest—a commencement of immortality—for the soul has already entered that 'eternal life' which springs from the knowledge and love of God. Yet it is a promise. It whispers of things to

[1] Kennedy Williamson, *The Uncarven Timbers*, 119.

be. It opens an infinite pathway. We never love God as we would here; yet we know that it is a love that shall deepen for ever. Thus in the promise and the earnest is a deep assurance of a spiritual kingdom, for, feeling God's love, a man must believe in immortality.

(2) *Power.*—This, again, is an element of our inheritance. We know that there can be no spiritual kingdom until the soul is king in its own house. Drifted on the tides of life, ruled but never ruling, it is no king, but a slave. But we know how He gives us might to dash aside temptation, to endure with strength equal to our day; and all this is but an earnest of what we shall be. Kings to God we shall become, by being priests over the sacrifice of our own selves. We never rule as we would. Our sacrifices are poor and tawdry before our aspirations. Yet every conflict, resistance, endurance is, by its longing for the more perfect, a pledge of the immortal kingdom which the eye cannot see.

(3) *Blessedness,* as a result of love and power.—This, too, is our inheritance, and we have the earnest of it grandly sometimes, generally in quiet peace. Yet the earnest is a promise. Amid our distractions we long for the eternal calm of the unseen kingdom. Amid our coldness we long for the life of full impassioned emotion, our life here seems so narrow, so poor, so low! All those longings are pledges. The Holy Spirit tells the soul of depths of bliss inconceivable, of which no tongue can speak—earnests are they all, assurances of the spiritual kingdom.

The 'earnests' of this world, which we see issuing and terminating in full payment, give us some help in conceiving the relation of the greater things, but not much; the earthly symbols are too narrow and feeble to express the largeness of the heavenly life. Take a little flower, the first opening blossom you can find in all the woods, while it is still winter—that is Nature's 'earnest'; and when in four or five months all the flowers are blooming, and the woods and gardens are gay—that is Nature's willing payment. Or take the green blade—the only one that appears above the red field-mould—that is the 'earnest' to the farmer of all the rich plenty of the harvest-day. And when that day comes—when the corn is yellow and the reapers are many, and the wains are loaded, and the garners are filling, and the farmyard is crowded with stacks, and song greets the morning, and sleep reigns through all the restful night—that is the payment in full of the earnest given long before by that one tender blade of green. And the difference is great between the two. But how much greater between the beginnings of grace and the fullnesses of glory! All the flowers on earth could not bloom into the meaning of *that,* nor all the cornfields, let them wave in what richness they may, tell the full harvest-joy of heaven!

The Inheritance.

Eph. i. 14.—'Our inheritance.'

What manner of inheritance must that needs be of which the Holy Spirit is but the first deposit? God has not described it. For language has fallen as much as men, and is unfitted to be the vehicle of heavenly things. From one partial and hasty vision of our inheritance, Paul says (being in danger of self-exaltation from the abundance of revelations 'which were given to him,') that a life-long affliction was laid upon him. All that he is able, or permitted, to say of these revelations is: 'I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, who was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.' For 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'

¶ '*Our* inheritance.' Let us bring out what Matthew Henry used to call the music of the pronouns. The sweetness and intimacy of the evangel hide in the pronoun; it is *our* inheritance. If I were to receive by post to-morrow morning the intimation that I had become heir to a wealthy estate, I should surely be possessed by a restless and insatiable curiosity. I should want to know the details of my good

fortune. I should be eager to make acquaintance with my lot, I should not rest until I had tracked its boundaries and knew their ways and byeways, and had become familiar with every corner. And here, in the words of the Apostle, it is made known to me that I am the heir to wealthy estates in the spirit, yet how indifferent I am as to my good fortune! Curiosity even is asleep; I know little or nothing about the quality of the estates, the treasures they contain, and the beauties which hide in the secret place. Let me arouse my interest. To know something of the inheritance may quicken my affection for the One who has bequeathed it unto me.[1]

In the passage where our text occurs the Apostle speaks of humanity's destiny in very general, and at the same time very wonderful, terms. He speaks of this destiny as related both to man and to God. He speaks of our inheritance and of God's own possession. We are to be enriched and God is to be enriched. We are to come into possession of all the wealth of God, and God is to take to Himself all that He has created in man and that He has lost by man's sin and wandering in the far country. Man is to be redeemed from the state of shame and misery into which he has fallen, and so enter into an honourable, noble and happy state, while God is to shake off that cloud that has fallen, as it were, upon His glory owing to the wickedness of men. This is the general statement which the Apostle Paul makes. He sees the future of mankind intimately involved in the being of God. He sees the human race as one day to be wholly reconciled to God. He sees man inheriting God and God possessing man.

(1) It is an inheritance *upon this earth.* Men's interest to-day in respect of humanity's destiny is centred almost entirely upon this earth. They want to know what humanity's destiny is to be upon earth. They want to know whether poverty and pain and war are to be abolished from the human lot. They are not deeply interested about heaven. They are not much concerned with the unseen world which we enter after death. That is other-worldly and unimportant. What they are concerned with is the earthly future. To these questions Christianity has its serene and radiant answer.

Christianity views all the past as under the constant care and loving guidance of God. From age to age He has prepared the way for the coming of Jesus, and now from century to century He has been reconciling the world unto Him. And what is to be the result so far as this earth and human society are concerned? When the Christian population of the world could be numbered at a few score of thousands of people, and human society was in a terrible state of shame and sin and slavery, Paul wrote to his friends at Ephesus, and said: 'Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory.' He had just told them that God was determined to sum up all the things on earth in Christ. Jesus Himself had said that the meek should inherit the earth. And the writer of the Apocalypse was soon to publish his glowing description of the community that one day is to be on earth, the New Jerusalem—or rather let us say the New London, the New England, the New Europe, the New Social Order for all mankind. What sort of a social order? What sort of a new London? One in which all will be to the praise and the glory of God: that is to say, not one in which there will be endless hymn-singing, or megaphones at every street corner shouting 'Hallelujah,' but a city in which everything that is done shall really be so completely noble and beautiful and instinct with love that the city itself could say what Jesus said, 'I and my Father are one.' Jesus praised God by being in absolute harmony with God. All buying and selling, all toil and amusement, all conversation and discussion, will praise God. About this we have no doubt. This state of society may be long in coming. It may come by ways undreamed of as yet. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour this is humanity's destiny upon earth.

(2) It is an inheritance *after death.* For Christianity has quite another perspective than

[1] J. H. Jowett.

that of the social reformer: it has a perspective which includes that of the reformer but looks far beyond him. Christianity sees humanity as a whole. The social reformer says with Burns, 'A man's a man for a' that.' Christianity says he is a child of God. Indeed, the Apostle Paul sweeps not only humanity but all the creatures of God into the scope of God's beneficent purpose. And this at least is true: Christianity sees that God has a far-reaching, all-embracing purpose for mankind, a purpose including not only a far distant happy generation, but all generations, and all unhappy generations—a purpose that includes us as well as any. Well, what is that destiny? In trying to describe it we are, of course, driven to use very general terms. If we adopt the thought of the Apostle Paul we may say very reverently, but with great daring, that humanity's destiny is involved in God's. It is nothing less than this—He is our inheritance, and humanity is God's possession. This is converted into a beautiful and tender figure by the writer of Revelation when he pictures the redeemed humanity as the bride of the Lamb. But no one, not even an inspired writer, can describe the destiny of humanity in any but a tentative way. We have not the apparatus, the language, the vision necessary. Who can describe the starlit heavens as they are? Who can even see them as they are? They seem glorious and terrible to us—what must they be to God, with all the splendour of them, and all the vast distance of them, and all the unnumbered host of them, quite clear and understood before Him? So humanity's destiny is far more wonderful and majestic and amazing than we can judge it from this place. But one thing is clear: this world does not exhaust it, and, even when social conditions are perfectly reversed, will not exhaust it. Our destiny is beyond in the world of the soul and of God.

The facts of Christian experience are such that they inevitably lead up to the conclusion that there is a life beyond. All that is good and blessed about religion, our faith, the joy that comes from our faith, the sweetness of communion, the aspiration after the increase of fellowship with Him; all these, to the man who enjoys them, are the best proof that they are going to last for ever, and that death can have no power over them. 'Like thought whose very sweetness yieldeth proof that they are born for immortality.'

This is the splendid destiny of humanity—to enjoy God forever and be His possession. When shall we see it? Who shall say? But it will be seen, of that we may be sure. Little as we have to do with the preparation of that inheritance, we shall certainly enjoy it.

Ye may not see the bud,
  The first sweet signs of spring,
The first dewdrops of the quickening shower
  On the dry hard ground that ring.

But the harvest home ye'll keep,
  The summer of life ye'll share;
When they that sow, and they that reap,
  Rejoice together *there*.

¶ I remember when first I landed in America, eighteen years ago, I was met at the docks by a man whose first question was, 'And what do you think of America?' How could I tell, who saw only the dock? So when we are asked what is after all human destiny, what shall we say if we are to judge only by this life? We are yet going into the great Continent of God's love to see it all.[1]

A Pauline Prayer.

Eph. i. 15-19 (AV).—'Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.'

Eph. i. 15-19 (RV).—'For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and which ye shew toward all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making

[1] Newton H. Marshall.

mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ.'

It is instructive to observe the appropriateness of Paul's prayers for the different churches to which he wrote. His intercessions were not merely general and formal, but suited to the circumstances and wants of each. For the Thessalonians, who were new converts among heathen immorality, he prays that they may be strengthened in holiness (1 Thess. iii. 11-13). Of the Galatians he stands in doubt, and travails in spirit till Christ be formed in them. For the Romans he prays that he may be prospered to come to them and impart some spiritual gift that they may be strengthened (Rom. i. 10, 11). For the Colossians, and Ephesians, he prays for true spiritual knowledge, probably because they were in danger of being led astray after a false knowledge.

Our text is the first of two great prayers in this Epistle. The Apostle seeks from 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,' the gift of the 'spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.' Those who receive this spirit will have 'the eyes of their heart enlightened.' This enlightenment will convey to them a threefold knowledge, namely, 'what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.' In these three is contained the complete manifestation of the fatherly sovereignty of God. Hence they are conveyed 'in the knowledge of him,' that is to say, of 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.' Men can know Him only as they come to realize these three elements of His gift to them in Christ. And, on the other hand, all three can be experienced only as vital parts of 'the knowledge of him' —knowledge which consists in living fellowship with Him in Christ.

1. We may say, then, that Paul here prays for one gift for these Christians. It is the gift of the Spirit. More exactly it is the gift of *a* Spirit. For it is not simply the Holy Spirit that he prays for. They had received the gift of the Holy Spirit already. It is that the Holy Spirit may make Himself known to them as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

The translation 'a spirit of wisdom and revelation' in the Revised Version is hardly necessary, and the word cannot be understood of the human spirit; for though to give a spirit of wisdom would be a Biblical expression for giving wisdom to our spirit, we could not take 'a spirit of revelation' to mean a spirit that receives revelation. The reference is rather to the Spirit of God, viewed in the special character of the giver of wisdom and revelation. Though Paul had just said that they had been sealed with the Holy Spirit, referring especially to the love, joy, and peace that accompany faith, he knew that they could not yet have attained the full measure of knowledge that he desired they should have; and, recognizing the Spirit of God as the giver of this also, he prays that God would give them the Spirit in this special character and work.

2. It is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation. The two terms are distinguishable, though they correspond to one another and are completely unified in the one Spirit, which includes and co-ordinates them both. 'Wisdom' implies a definite temper and activity of mind on the believer's part. It involves insight, discrimination, choice, and steadfast pursuit. The wisdom of the wise enables them to appreciate the true values of life; to set its ends in true order and fixity before the mind. In addition, it prompts them to adjust themselves to these ends and to select the best means to their attainment. Wisdom represents, therefore, the power of appreciation and selection of values, the ordering of the spiritual temper in conformity with them. While it has intellectual and affectional elements, there is also a pronounced volitional quality about it. The word 'revelation' suggests more markedly a

gift which men may continuously enjoy, but which they neither create nor control. It is part of earthly wisdom, for instance, to love the sunlight and to seek to walk in it. But the sunlight itself comes as a revelation when the sun emerges from the clouds and sheds its light-giving rays upon men. In the same way the Spirit that is bestowed upon believers operates by way of revelation, presenting to them realities which exist independently of them. Yet these realities, by their vital contact with the spiritual faculties of the sons of God, become part of their conscious experience and inheritance. Then wisdom makes use of the whole content of the revelation.

¶ The old Puritan, John Robinson, had the mind of Paul when he sang 'The Lord hath still more light and truth to break forth from His word.' The Spirit which gives us wisdom bestows upon us also revelations of saving truth beyond the reach of our own research, leading us to understand the purposes of God hitherto unknown. When we reach the wisdom of God we are like Christopher Columbus when he touched the West Indies: we are on the verge of a whole continent hitherto unknown.[1]

3. But what is it that this Spirit is to reveal to us, and in what are we to seek wisdom? The answer is, 'in the knowledge of him.' He is to be to them a Spirit of revelation, making God better known to them, and a Spirit of wisdom, enabling them to make God better known to others.

Now by this knowledge of God is meant not any mere formal acquaintanceship with Him, but that close spiritual intimacy which the Old Testament understands when it speaks again and again of 'knowing' God. None can know Him in the sense of this prayer without having a deep spiritual experience of the meaning of the fatherly-filial relationship which takes its rise in the act of forgiveness. So the Apostle goes on to pray, 'Having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.'

¶ St. Paul prays that they may have an intimate knowledge of God. Do we pray like that, as deep as that, for our own children, and for all the children of men? An intimate knowledge of God! That first of all and last of all. But, mark you! knowledge not in the form of a more elaborate theology, but of a simpler and nobler religion. Let us grasp very firmly a distinction which we are apt to ignore. Musical ability is one thing, and musical appreciation is quite another. You may be unable to play a single note, and yet the genius of music may dwell in your soul. 'I cannot play it myself,' a man may say, 'and yet I know when it is well done!' That is to say, a man may be possessed of musical taste though he be devoid of musical expression. And so it is in art. A man may have little or nothing of the artist's craft, but may be very rich in artistic instinct. He may be helpless with his hand, and mighty with his eye. And so it is in poetry. A man may have nothing of the poet's utterance, but a rich endowment of the poet's soul. He may have little of the poet's form, but much of the poet's spirit. And I adduce these manifold illustrations from music, and art, and poetry to show that there is a profound appreciation which is independent of formal expression. I can appreciate music, and know nothing of its technique or terminology. I can appreciate beauty, and be ignorant of the first laws of art. And I can apprehend and appreciate God and yet be a novice in formal theology. And when the Apostle prays that these young believers may have a deeper and deepening knowledge of God, he is on the plane of instinct and appreciation, and not on the plane of criticism, and logic, and theology. He is praying for a knowledge which is not formal but spiritual; which belongs to friendship, and not to scholarship; and which will make not mere learned doctrinaires, but radiant saints. When he prays that they may have a deeper knowledge, he is praying for a more

[1] G. Watt Smith, *Byeways of Bible Highways*, 162.

exquisite acquaintance with the heart-grace and heart-love of the eternal God.[1]

¶ The word for 'knowledge' here means not only *true* knowledge as opposed to opinion and speculation, but *full* knowledge as opposed to a partial and imperfect acquaintance. The transition from a knowledge of God to a full knowledge of Him is strikingly illustrated in the biography of Frances Ridley Havergal. For many years she had loved her Lord and delighted in His service, but there were reservations in her surrender, and her experience was consequently intermittent. It was on Advent Sunday, 1873, that she first saw clearly the blessedness of entire consecration. 'I saw it,' she says, 'as a flash of electric light, and what you *see* you can never unsee.' Writing of this memorable epoch in her spiritual life, she says, 'It lifted my whole life into sunshine, of which all that I had previously experienced was but as pale and passing April gleams compared with the fulness of summer glory.'[2]

4. In what the knowledge of God will consist the Apostle is about to tell them specifically. It is in its specific facts so wonderful that we are all ready to say, 'it is too high, I cannot attain to it.' And so he inserts the condition.' —'the eyes of your heart being enlightened.' And this condition is part of the prayer, as it is part of the gift. He prays that through the inspired wisdom given them his readers may have their reason enlightened to see the grandeur and wealth of their religion. This is a vision for 'the eyes of the heart.' It is disclosed to the eye behind the eye, to the heart which is the true discerner.

The seeing eyes
See best by the light in the heart that lies.

¶ The biographer of the late Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, says of him: 'He lived under the benignant sway of a succession of great truths, following one another like the constellations of the heavens.' In successive periods of his life familiar truths in succession became extraordinary, captivating him, filling him with wonder, thrilling him with delight. Is not this the ideal life? First one and then another article of the creed glowing into light, dawning on the soul, seizing it, occupying it, delighting it, leaving it with special enrichment and perfection![1]

5. 'That ye may know'—what? 'That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,' the standard and measure of that power being revealed in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. These three things the Apostle desires that his readers may see with the heart's enlightened eyes: the *hope to which God calls them,* the *wealth that He possesses in them,* and the *power which He is prepared to exert upon them as believing men.* It is a threefold knowledge, embracing all eternity—the past, the future, and, not least, the present.

(1) *'What is the hope of his calling.'*—St. Paul does not say 'the hope of your calling,' *i.e.,* His calling of you: though that is included. The expression is wider: it is universal. We are taken back, as in the earlier verses of the chapter, to the great past of eternity, before the foundations of the world were laid. It is 'his calling,' in the fullest sense, that we need to understand. That 'calling' involves a 'hope,' and we must learn to know what that hope is. It is a certain hope: for it rests on the very fact that the calling is God's calling, and no weak wish of ours for better things. 'Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.'

¶ The hope of the Christian is a living hope —living in its endurance—living in its uplifting power. The poor hope of the worldling is a perishing thing. It crumbles into dust as he seeks to grasp it. It withers like a flower when he fain would pluck it. It fades as he pursues it and leaves him in the darkness of despair. Over all the schemes and ambitions

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The Examiner,* Sept. 10, 1908, p. 222.
[2] J. G. Mantle, *God's To-morrow,* 109.

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Ashes of Roses,* 81.

of earth, over all the desires and aspirations of men which are not directed Godwards, we must write the common epitaph, 'Dead hopes.' But where the world's hopes perish, the hope of the Christian only leaps into fuller vigour. When John Knox lay dying, as Carlyle reminds us, his hope won its greatest victory. He had lived a hard and strenuous life, 'wrestling with popes and principalities; in defeat, contention, life-long struggle; rowing as a galley slave, wandering in exile. "Have you hope?" they asked him in his last moments, when he could no longer speak. He lifted his hand, pointed upwards with his finger, and so died.'[1]

(2) '*What the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*'—This, too, they must know: the glory of the eternal future. Again, it is not 'of your inheritance'—but something grander far. It is 'his inheritance'; of which they are but a tiny, though a necessary, part. 'The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.' In an earlier verse the Apostle has spoken of the inheritance of man in God (ver. 11); here he reverses the picture and dwells upon the inheritance of God in man. It is a wonderful thought that God, whose dominion stretches far beyond the widest limits of the heavens swept by human eye, whose sceptre holds sway over illimitable space and innumerable worlds, should yet seek a heritage among the sons of men. That He should set such store by poor frail children of dust, that He should value so highly our human love, that He should care so little for the teeming universe and so much for us as to call us 'his inheritance,' is a truth so amazing that if it were not written down in the pages of His own Word of Truth we dare not believe it. Yet here it is—'his inheritance in the saints.'

¶ Indeed, God does not miscalculate, when He pronounces the soul and the saint His wealthiest possession. You cannot estimate their value in terms of gold and gems and houses and lands, nor yet by astronomical distances and geological periods. A man chosen by the Father, and redeemed by the blood of the Son, and sanctified by the indwelling of the Spirit, is greater than all of these. If, in one sense, we are frail children of dust, in another we are deathless children of eternity; and God did not consider the Incarnation, and the Atonement, and the Baptism of Pentecost a price too extravagant and supreme to give for us. I am His child; and He makes no mistake in magnitudes and proportions if He prefers His child above the cloud-capt towers and the gorgeous palaces and the great globe itself.[1]

(3) Lastly, and very specially, 'the power' by which we can fulfil our calling and possess our heritage, '*the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.*' The life the Christian has to live here on earth is so truly the life of God in the soul that nothing that we can do can maintain that life, or renew it. It is a life that we have in Christ; it is a life to be received out of Christ by faith daily and hourly. It is a life which the omnipotence of God Himself alone can begin and carry on. And the great need of the believer is to wait upon God for the Holy Spirit to show 'the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.' No human mind can grasp it; the Holy Spirit living in the heart reveals it, and teaches us to believe it, and to expect it. As Christians we need to know that we are to depend every day upon God to work in us according to 'the exceeding greatness of his strength in us who believe,' and every day to accept the Holy Spirit's teaching in answer to prayer, to keep us conscious of this mighty power working in us.

With regard to this mighty power dwelling in us the Holy Spirit shows us what its work and nature are. It is the power of God, 'according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand.' It is this power that works in us who believe, to raise us up from a life under the power of death to a life in the glory of heaven. It is by the exceeding greatness of this power to us-ward who believe

[1] G. A. Sowter, *Trial and Triumph*, 255.

[1] A. Smellie, *Out of the Desert a Gift*, 172.

that our daily life has to be lived, in fellowship with the life of the Son of God. God raised Christ from the dead because His death on the Cross had been the exhibition of the deepest humility and the most perfect obedience. Because He had yielded Himself unreservedly to the power of God, both in His life and suffering and in His surrender to death and the grave, God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. And even so when we give ourselves over to die with Christ to sin and the world and the flesh, in a Christlike humility and obedience, the exceeding greatness of His power will work in us to make us partakers, day by day, of the Resurrection power, and of the Spirit of glory which followed it.

¶ In a recent work of fiction there is a weird story of a wild man who went to live in a wild wood, and became the companion of a wild cat. He found it caught in a trap and released it, but its leg was broken. The cat became the devoted slave of its deliverer. They were inseparable, but whenever the cat is mentioned, attention is drawn to the fact that it 'trailed a limb.' If it went hunting it went 'trailing a limb,' and when it returned with its prey it came 'trailing a limb.' Always and everywhere it trailed a limb. There are many Christians like that cat. They are delivered, but they trail a limb; and the one thing that always forces itself upon the attention is the trailing limb. All their excellencies are forgotten in the obtrusion of one glaring defect. A good man, but then comes the trailing limb of uncontrolled temper, uncharitable judgment, worldliness, covetousness, or some other unhealed infirmity of the flesh or spirit.

Now the gospel of the Resurrection comes with a message of healing and power for the trailing limb. Jesus Christ trailed no limb. There was no part of His body that did not receive the fullness of energy and life, and our salvation is after the likeness of His resurrection. His life-giving power does not stop short at each man's trailing limb. He brings to the soul the gift of abundant life. He saves to the uttermost. When He healed the sick He made them whole. When He gave a man sight He did not send him to buy spectacles. The maimed He healed had no further use for crutches. Are there conditions in the spiritual sphere that baffle His power and leave His work imperfect? Is the power which raised Christ from the dead inadequate to restore a trailing limb? Nay, He is able to deliver us out of the hands of all our enemies, and His blood cleanses from all sin. He saves men by a new creation, and not only checks the virus in the blood, but cleanses it. The supreme miracle is the warrant of a complete, present, and eternal deliverance from all sin. The limb that has been trailed for a life-time need not be trailed another hour. Here and now the exceeding greatness of the power demonstrated in the resurrection of Christ may be realized in the complete deliverance of the soul from every trace of bondage and death. The power of His resurrection secures a full salvation, sustained continually in the strength of His might. So that, being raised with Him, we walk with Him in newness of life.[1]

The Eyes of the Heart.

Eph. i. 18.—'Having the eyes of your heart enlightened' (RV).

1. For 'the eyes of your understanding' the Revised Version, following the best manuscripts, has 'the eyes of your heart.' The expression is unusual and that may have been the cause of the change made later, and introduced into the 'Received' Greek text, which was used by the translators of the Authorized Version. Unusual it may be, yet what an expression it is. How beautiful, how suggestive, how bright in thought.

It would be a mistake to carry into the Bible that nicety of mental distribution which is sometimes deceptive even in human metaphysics. We are aware that 'heart' in the language of the Bible is larger and more inclusive than in our modern acceptation. In Scripture it means sometimes all that is in

[1] S. Chadwick, *Humanity and God*, 147.

man. 'From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts,' of blasphemy and foolishness, as well as of passion and lasciviousness. Still, that there is a difference usually recognized in the Bible between 'heart' and 'understanding' will be evident in a moment if we try in some particular instance to interchange the two. 'With my whole heart have I sought thee.' 'I cried with my whole heart.' 'In the integrity of my heart . . . have I done this.' 'Give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart.' 'See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.' 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? . . . He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart.' Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'

¶ Our eyes have feasted with delight upon the fascination of a spreading landscape in which mountain and moorland, forest and fell, rock and river, have all combined to lend their charms, while the golden sunshine bathed the whole in a floodtide of glory. But the eye of the heart sees grander sights than these. To it alone the Invisible God becomes Visible and full of glory. By it alone His beauty is discerned. Upon its retina alone is imprinted the tender hues of Divine love. The heart knows what the cold intellect can never grasp, sees what the outward eye can never see. When the eyes of the heart are enlightened, the knowledge of God becomes so intense and delightful a reality that man craves no other demonstration, but cries with joy:—

> I know not by what art
> This power is given;
> I only know He has my heart,
> And I have—heaven.[1]

2. We know what it means to have the intellect enlightened. Everywhere we are encouraging new knowledge. The sciences are all new, the practical affairs of life are conducted in new methods, with new instruments, and, we may almost say, with new purposes. We live not only on a new continent, but in a veritable new world. Enlightenment of the understanding seems at times the single, all-important necessity. All our great system of schools, and colleges, and universities is to the one end of providing this enlightened understanding for the growing generation. And we summon the young people to every sacrifice that they may attain to the enlightenment needed.

Paul was the last to disparage the understanding, or to think lightly of its importance. But he knew something far more important than that. Therefore his prayer is not for the enlightenment of the intellect, but for the dew of heaven upon the heart. The heart is the man, and the man must be reached if the work of God is to go forward. Sadly we discover that the enlightenment of the intellect goes but a short way in changing the character. Character rests upon decisions of the will, the abiding purposes of life, and these are determined primarily by the feelings. It is therefore the enlightenment of the heart, the stirring up of the feelings, the opening of the deep wells of the soul, and the appeal to the essential nature of the man himself that alone answers the call of God, and that alone can make men free in the large sense of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The mere accumulation of knowledge is like the stuffing of the stove with fuel—it remains as cold and dead as the iron itself until the fire is kindled, which alone can transform it, and set free its imprisoned energies.

¶ When we meet a man thus transformed, one in whom the eyes of the heart are indeed enlightened, how all hearts open to him! Some years ago, a young Scotch professor came to America. He travelled from college to college. Everywhere the young men flocked about him, and he held their hearts in his hand. His tongue was as a tongue of fire, and his face shone with the light that won all hearts. What was it that gave Henry Drummond his power? He was a traveller, but there were many others more venturesome and with more thrilling tales. He was a scholar, but by no means of the first rank. He was a fluent speaker, but that means little in a land of fluent speakers. His power lay

[1] G. A. Sowter, *Trial and Triumph*, 253.

in his personality. Everyone who sat before him felt that here was a man with a heart, a man in whom the love of Christ was the supreme passion, and whose whole nature had been surrendered to that love and was now permeated with that consuming passion. The love of God which had taken possession of him became in him love for his fellowmen—a deep generous abiding love. Hearts everywhere responded to it and multitudes of young men were awakened into a new life and started in new paths because Henry Drummond opened the eyes of their hearts.[1]

3. There are two conditions to be fulfilled in order to see.

(1) We must see with the heart. In other words, the eye of knowledge must be the eye of love. Tell us not of people quick-sighted to the faults of their brother; of men said to be discerning because they are suspicious, good judges of character because with them every character is bad. That is a devil's knowledge, from which God keep us all. Doubtless every character has its bad side. The amiable are sometimes weak, and the strong are sometimes unamiable. The religious are sometimes censorious, and charity is sometimes seen in divorce from orthodoxy. Doubtless evil spirits see these inconsistencies —see perhaps little else in us—and make sport of them. But he who would see another truly, see him through and through, must see him, in his measure, as God sees him—with the eyes of the heart, which are the eyes of love.

¶ Love throws over all imperfect lives the mantle of love; she does not declare nor discover the sorrowed shame. Love stands in the presence of a fault with a finger on her lips. Love will not be a common crier nor a common informer.

Some hastily believe in the faults of others, but they are not the children of love. I wish these people would take a turn at crying up, at exaggerating the good of people; that they would go from house to house trumpeting up all the pretty stories they could tell about their neighbours. I do not tell people to lie, but if there must be exaggeration, one desires a change. Love, although it will not tell an untruth, is quick-sighted to see the good in others, and is a little blind to their failings.[1]

(2) There is a second condition of seeing. The organ of sight is created, and yet there is not vision. Light is wanting. St. Paul prays that the eyes of the heart may be enlightened. There must be, first, a revelation of the invisible. The light unapproachable must itself approach.

¶ The experience of one, taken almost at hazard from a beautiful biography, is the experience of multitudes. 'I have always felt that there was a something between me and God; that there was a barrier I had no power over, which seemed to stop, as it were, my communication with Him, to hide Him from me. When I attempted to pray, it was often with a feeling, Where shall I find Him? a sort of vagueness about the whole thought of Him. I am aware now that I did not believe in the reality of any deeper feeling. . . . Now, it is but faint, yet I have a feeling within—it is not a thought, a belief, but a feeling. . . . I look to myself so ugly in the past, that I wonder anyone could love me. . . . When I read in my Bible, every word seems as if it applied to me personally; words that were before an empty sound, seem to pierce through me. All my previous religious impressions seem to have left the root of the matter untouched; now I am sure that I am being drawn to God, and that He will lift me up to rest wholly on His promises and to taste His peace. . . . I feel quite fearful lest the delicacy of the new feeling should be hurt or damped. It is certainly very mysterious. I feel a constant wonder at myself at what I am sure is no delusion, and yet is so distinct from any previous impression. It is not a difference in degree—it is an awakening to life; a removing of what before seemed to be between me and God, as if He was hid from my eyes.'[2]

[1] H. A. Stimson, *The New Things of God*, 190.

[1] *Love and Life: The Story of J. Denholm Brash*, 139.

[2] C. J. Vaughan, *University Sermons*, 223.

That 'the eyes of your heart' may be 'enlightened'—that is the prayer for all of us, if we would but believe it. It is written, many a time, of holy men of old that they saw visions of God; and we either do not credit that, or we think it belonged to an age of miracles. If a man were to stand up in the market-place and tell us that he had had a vision of God we should set him down as a lunatic. And when we read about the prophets seeing God in His holiness and hearing His words and walking consciously in His presence, the hard-headed man sets it down as a fantasy and delusion. We hardly believe it possible for any man to see things of God which are invisible to us. Yet the savage Indian will trace a path unerringly through trackless forests where we can see no guiding marks at all, and a simple mariner will read on the surface of the sea a thousand signs of rocks and shoals and deep waters beneath where our eyes see nothing but one monotonous colour. Their eyes have been opened by long intentness on this very thing. How mad we are to suppose that those whose lives were one long searching after God could not see and feel more of Him than we do! If we longed for Him as much as they did, if we spent as many hours at His unseen feet, if we held ourselves in hours of silence listening for His voice, He would make Himself known and felt in a thousand sweet and unmistakable ways of which we have now no perception.

The Hope of the World To-Day.

Eph. i. 18, 19.—'That ye may know what is the hope of his calling . . . and what is the exceeding greatness of his power.'

The world into which Christianity first came was extraordinarily like our own. The more we know of the conditions—political, psychological, religious—of the first century of the Roman Empire, the more striking grows the parallel between them and those in which we live. The background of the apostolic age, across which the New Testament characters move, might almost seem to be the twentieth century. Its broad outlines are familiar enough, but they may perhaps be roughly sketched in here; for nothing is likely to give a clearer conception of the vividness and reality of the gospel than to see it in its concrete setting amid the life and problems of those days. To understand what the gospel means to us, we must know what it meant to those who first received it.

Like ours, the world into which the new faith came was crushing men by its complexity. It was a war-weary world, baffled in its attempts at reconstruction, dazed by vast and bewildering transitions. Established social conditions were collapsing. Accepted class-distinctions had grown blurred; the profiteer was entering into society and the unprivileged were beginning to count. The old regime could no longer be taken for granted. Political groupings were shifting and breaking up, old ties and loyalties were being snapped, and the individual was left spiritually homeless and self-conscious in a cosmopolitan civilization. Externally brilliant, it was morally rotten, and wealth and elegance scarcely drew a veil over cruelty and decadent forms of vice, of which the Epistles give relentless catalogues. There is, of course, a bright side to the picture. Noble aspirations were there in plenty, fine idealisms, kindness, courtesy; only, there was no moral driving-power. The distinctive note of the imperial world is the note of disillusionment. Men longed for a fresh start which they could not get, for a deliverance they could not find, for a fellowship which they could not achieve. They could not recover because they had not hope. People were lost and lonely and disappointed. There was no vital faith in anything to simplify life for them and make it whole and liberate their moral energies. For the old religions had been undermined, and few believed them any longer. The great majority of people fought through a fog of choking superstitions, credulous, magical, and demon-haunted. Some found in the Greek and Eastern 'Mysteries,' with their thrilling sacramental worship, some form of at least emotional relief. A surprising number were hangers-on of Judaism, as a moral but not a

ceremonial code. The traditional priesthoods had become a farce: the real religious guides were the philosophers, especially those of the Stoic school, of whom Seneca (Nero's tutor and the brother of Gallio) is the best known. The professors of philosophy were almost spiritual 'directors,' at any rate to the cultured, leisured classes. But Stoicism offered good advice, and the heart of the world was aching for redemption.

It is true, of course, that Our Lord's life and teaching moved within far narrower boundaries. The gospel which was to renew the world was preached in primitive Galilean villages in a simple and little-organized society. But it was on the ampler stage of civilization in the Graeco-Roman cities that its implications were worked out. In the complex life of the early Empire its experiments were made and its experiences verified. Those who tell us that a social ethic preached to an agricultural population in Galilee and the Syrian country-side can have no adequate solution for our Industrial Democracies, may fairly be asked to read the actual records. The earliest Church was obsessed by no such scruples. After a momentary hesitation it turned at once to the world of imperial culture to lay the foundations of a new civilization. Within a few years after the Crucifixion Palestine was already a backwater. The Christian mission went to the urban life of the great seaports and economic capitals, to work the gospel out in action. The whole civilized world was represented when, six weeks after the Resurrection, the Church received its Pentecostal baptism. Within twenty years of the death of Stephen it was charged with 'turning the Empire upside down' (Acts xvii. 6). It is plain at least that the earliest disciples, who had known the Great Reformer best, did not doubt that His religion could restore and rebuild civilization under conditions far more complex than any that had ever crossed their minds. It was not in Galilee at all, but in Corinth and Ephesus, that their work was done.

It is doubtless true that the first generation lived their lives under the urgent sense of an imminent return of Christ, and the sudden, catastrophic rolling-up of the civilization of 'the World.' Full allowance must be made for this, and it must be frankly admitted that this belief, falsified as it was by events, impressed on some of the thought of the New Testament a sense which we cannot now accept literally. But it is very easily exaggerated. And in any case, however prominent the idea of a 'Coming in the clouds of heaven' may have been in the minds of the earliest believers, it did *not* work out in the way that is often suggested. It did not paralyse their moral enterprise. They did not say, 'There is no time to change things.' Rather, they said, 'He may come at any moment: Let us get the house ready for Him' (*cf.* Luke xii. 34ff.). It sent them out with a passion to save society, and it gave them a certainty in the Eternal world, directing their activity in this. The cruder form of the earlier expectation was soon transmuted into the conviction that supernatural forces were at work destined to overthrow the established order, that Christ was sovereign over human life and at work within human nature through His Present Spirit, lifting it up to a more than earthly destiny. That was a world-overcoming faith. The dominant note of the New Testament is the sense of limitless human possibilities in the transforming power of the Spirit of Christ. That is the basis of all 'Reconstruction.' This faith in human possibilities penetrates all our conceptions of social justice and the Christian organization of Society, and lies at the root of any vivid belief in the renewal of the coming age.

The worst of it is that we Christians as a whole have almost lost any real expectancy. We do not think that Christianity can redeem and change society: we think of it as a means of 'saving souls.' When it was openly stated in 1914 that Christianity had no application to social and political morality, the English Christian conscience was affronted. We went to war to prove that it was not true. Yet it

was only stripping the disguise from what, in fact, was too nearly our own attitude. We regarded our religion as mainly concerned with the individual's soul, saving people out of this 'naughty world' rather than making the naughty world a place fit for sons and daughters of God to live in. We did not think it would turn the world upside down. Sometimes the evil in the world was regarded as inevitable, even acquiesced in as a means for exercising 'Christian charity' and training ourselves for heaven after death. But, says Dean Inge, 'If you once give your moral assent to other people's sins and sorrows as affording a field for your altruistic activities, your moral sense must be in a sadly diseased condition.' It would, no doubt, be a cruel caricature to suggest that this is a normal Christian attitude. Yet it is undeniable that 'soul-culture,' or at least salvation for the individual, had become the dominant note of our religion. Christianity had got confused with pietism.

Our despairing acquiescence would have been entirely inconceivable to our Lord's first followers. The kingdom of God which He preached in Galilee is, through and through, a social salvation. He wanted to rebuild society from its spiritual foundations upwards round the new controlling principle of the true Reality of God. He would be satisfied with nothing less. Religion, for Him, means *doing the will of God*, and He knew that the will of God is health and justice, joy and liberty and brotherhood. He was the supreme Believer in God, and as such the supreme Believer in Mankind. He knew that what was chiefly wrong with the world was a wrong idea about God. He went about awakening in men a new sense of expectancy based upon a renewed belief in God. 'How little you trust God,' He used to say. For Him, faith in God carried with it, as inherent in its very nature, a certainty of God's victoriousness. 'All things are possible with God.' His will, because it is His will, must prevail. The Kingdom, because it is God's, must surely come. 'It is His good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.' Therefore our Lord could move about among men, calling them back to a joyous confidence in the availability of God. Thus His ministry was, as a later writer put it, the 'bringing in of a better hope.' He gave back hope to a despairing world, because He brought it face to face with God.

On the foundation of this triumphant certainty He fashioned the new fabric of Society. In His own words, He 'despaired of nobody' (Luke vi. 35, R.V. marg.). He knew that no human life, however broken, was too hard a problem for His Father. He knew that God can give 'new lives for old': that there is a creative love at work in the world, inexhaustible and unfailing, if men would only open their hearts and take it. Thus, however dark the situation, however great the failure and the ruin of the lives with which He was confronted, we can see no trace of His ever losing heart. He staked all on God's renewing power, and died to prove that His confidence was justified.

There is little in our contemporary Christianity comparable to this massive faith of Jesus. We cannot lead the world until we recover it. 'Is it not clear that one great reason why faith in the Incarnation, the work of Christ and the gift of the Spirit, mean so little to the youth of the nation is that they do not know that the essence of the Christian life is faith, hope, and love?' So we are told that Religion is out of touch with the realities of daily life and the clamorous problems of the world. We must at least recover our expectancy that the spirit of Christ can renew the face of the earth, and the Kingdom be established among men. According to our faith it will be to us.

The central act of Christian worship is really charged with this confident expectation. Our Lord seems definitely to have declared that by His death a new age would have dawned. The world could never be the same again. 'From henceforth shall the Son of man be seated at the right hand of the Power of God. 'I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.' That conviction that His sacrifice was inaugurating a New Order

is inseparable from the Last Supper. We show forth the Lord's death *till He come*. One branch of the Church preserves this expectant outlook in its Eucharistic symbolism. In the Coptic churches the bread is freshly baked and taken still hot from the oven for consecration. 'Ye shall eat it in haste'; there is no time to let it cool, as though life were normal and ordinary and slow. Unless you are quick, the Lord may have returned! The life communicated through the sacred elements is eternal life—'the life of the world to come'—offered us here and now in the fields of time, to turn Wapping into the City of God.

To learn to expect again that God will do things, to look for new irruptions of the Spirit coming in power like a rushing mighty wind, to rediscover God's availability—this is the hungry need of the Church to-day and the only hope of a disappointed world.[1]

God's Efficiency.

Eph. i. 19-20.—'The exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power (RV 'that working of the strength of his might') which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.'

Power! Efficiency! That is the word which is in the air. On all sides we are besieged with demands to bring life up to the level at which it becomes efficient. Well, the Apostle is very modern here. He exalts efficiency, the efficiency of God. Whatever God has to do He is able to do it. He is equipped for every demand that is made upon Him. Has He to raise Jesus from the dead? He is able to do it. He does it. He more than does it. He sets Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. Has He to raise us from spiritual death? He does it. 'You who were dead in trespasses and sins hath he quickened.' He does more. He 'hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'

1. God's efficiency is seen in raising Jesus from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the New Testament standard of power. It is the sample and pledge of what God can do for man. In the Old Testament the standard miracle was the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. From Moses to Malachi the appeal was to the Red Sea as the supreme demonstration of God's power to help and save. When the prophets sought to inspire courage and confidence, they pointed back to that mighty deliverance which brought up their fathers from the land of bondage. And when God renews His promise to Israel, He takes them back to the same spot and says, 'As in the days of thy coming forth out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things.' In the New Testament the Red Sea is superseded by the empty tomb, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead stands at the forefront of the Christian dispensation, as the greatest achievement of Omnipotence, and the standard of what God can do for them that believe.

How is it that Paul speaks with such a passion of emphasis of 'the working of the strength of [God's] might which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead'? The Apostle seems to be struggling with an idea too large for expression. The Divine power manifested in the resurrection of Christ appears to him so immense that he accumulates epithet on epithet to describe it. What is the explanation of the extraordinary strength of the Apostle's language? Our Lord Himself raised the dead. He raised the daughter of Jairus and the son of a widow at Nain. He raised His friend Lazarus of Bethany after he had been dead four days. These miraculous acts were no doubt very wonderful; but the writers of the four Gospels record them without any expression of astonishment, and there is not even a passing reference to any one of them in any of the Epistles. Why should the resurrection of our Lord Himself have been described by Paul with this vehemence and intensity of language? Why should he have spoken of it as if it were the great triumph of the power of God?

[1] F. R. Barry, *St. Paul and Social Psychology*, 1ff.

The answer to these questions is to be found in the unique character of our Lord's Resurrection. When the daughter of Jairus was brought back to life she returned to the same life that she had lived before she died; she was a child again in her father's house. We know nothing of her later history; but if she lived many years she passed through all the common experiences of the race; she ate and drank and slept; she grew up to womanhood; she may have married; she had the ordinary cares and sorrows and joys of womanhood; illness came to her as it came to others, and at last she died a second time and was buried. It was the same with the young man at Nain. He went home with his mother, continued to work at his trade, took once more the place in the common ranks of men which for a few hours had been vacant, lived and died like other men. It was the same with Lazarus. He came from his sepulchre to the quiet house in Bethany from which his dead body had been carried, and lived with his sisters as he had lived before. There is no reason to believe that his intellectual powers had received any sudden enlargement, or that his moral life had risen to any extraordinary heights of grandeur, or that in any other respect he had become a very different man from what he was before. He took up the broken threads of life just where he had left them, and was the same man that he had always been, except that the days of death and the hour in which, at the command of Christ, he returned to the common paths of men must always have been recalled by him with a certain wonder and awe. But the resurrection of Christ was not a return to the life which death had interrupted. It was the beginning of a new life under altogether new conditions. The Resurrection was followed by the Ascension. God 'raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he put all things in subjection under his feet.'

2. God's efficiency is seen in raising out of spiritual death those who believe. The power that raised Christ is that which works grace in us, accomplishes in us a spiritual resurrection. It is supremely comforting to the Christian to know from his own experience that in him that same power is working which wrought in Christ. This vital union subsists between Christ and the believer. That power of God which manifested the greatness of its might in preventing Christ from being held under the power of death must work like mightiness in us. To know, then, that Christ our life lives is to know the power of God 'to us-ward.'

Our Lord's Resurrection is not merely the measure of God's power towards believers, but its type. It is thereby represented as a vital, or rather as a revitalizing energy. At first sight it might seem that the power of God as it wrought in the Resurrection of our Lord and as it is manifested in the quickening of believers works in two totally dissimilar spheres. The Resurrection of Christ appears to be a physical phenomenon, whereas the quickening of believers is purely spiritual. Doubtless the preponderating element differs in each case. Moreover, the spiritual and moral quickening which comes to those who were dead through their trespasses can have no counterpart in the case of the sinless Christ. Yet it would be altogether a mistake to suppose that St. Paul treated our Lord's Resurrection as a merely physical representation or analogy of what is involved in the spiritual resurrection of believers. In the case of our Lord it is clear that the physical process of resurrection and ascension is interpenetrated by spiritual elements. Our Lord's exaltation to God's 'right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come,' is not merely spatial, nor does it represent a merely external authority. The same is true of His universal sovereignty and His headship 'over all things to the church which is his body.' Our Lord's Resurrection is the outward and visible clothing of a

spiritual process by which He comes to His heavenly and universal sovereignty. The physical miracle is not thrown out of relation to the spiritual development, nor is there any disproportion between the one and the other. It takes great and thorough-going spirituality to apprehend St. Paul's view of our Lord's Resurrection. In the same way, the spiritual quickening which comes to believers in Christ has definite physical consequences. It marks their bodies out as destined to share in the quickening (*cf.* Rom. viii.). It is fulfilled in new moral qualities which have an incalculable effect upon the whole range of the earthly life of which the body is the medium and instrument.

¶ Ever since the first Easter Day there have been men aware of a new power within themselves, the might of a life higher than that which is known to the processes of nature, a life by which they have secured victory over evil in themselves and the world, a life proceeding to an ever wider range of experience, manifold, indestructible, invincible, a life everlasting. Already it is theirs, while yet it promises an ever larger amplitude of life hereafter. This is the supreme witness to the resurrection, and it convinces all who know its meaning.

Charlemagne, crowned and throned in the crypt beneath the dome at Aachen, was thought by medieval Europe to be sleeping only for a time, waiting for his people's last extremity, when he would rise to defend his realm against the Norsemen, who in his lifetime had so clouded his soul with care. But this is no parable of the resurrection. Easter Day declares that the Lord of Life was never conquered by death. He took it to Himself, and by that act overcame it, triumphing over it. The Crucified rests in no long sleep. His people are not compelled to wait until He can shake off the cold bonds of death. He lives now in the plenitude of His risen power. He lives and reigns, and though we see not yet all things under His feet, those who rely on His power know that they share His triumph.[1]

[1] *The Spirit of Man*, Selected Essays from 'The Times,' ii., 249.

3. Why does the Apostle thus pray and press this stupendous fact on believers at Ephesus, and on the Church of God?

First, because it was his great delight and privilege to set forth 'the good pleasure of' his heavenly Father's will, 'the riches of his grace,' 'the praise of the glory of his grace.' Secondly, that he might bring comfort, assurance, joy unspeakable, and ever-abounding gladness to those whom he was instructing, that they might be encouraged to 'work out their own salvation,' in the knowledge and fruition of the almighty power that works in those who believe! For the difficulty with many children of God seems not so much, 'Shall I be raised up at the last?' but, 'Shall I be kept in the meantime?' Now the power by which we believe is not only according to the mighty power that raised up Christ from the dead, but also according to the power that set Him at God's right hand far above all principalities and powers, and therefore the Apostle argues elsewhere, 'I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is *in Christ Jesus* our Lord.'

And didst Thou love the race that loved not Thee,
And didst Thou take to Heaven a human brow?
Dost plead with man's voice by the marvellous sea?
Art Thou his kinsman now?

O God, O Kinsman, loved, but not enough!
O man, with eyes majestic after death,
Whose feet have toiled along our pathways rough,
Whose lips drawn human breath!

By that one likeness which is ours and Thine,
By that one nature which doth hold us kin,
By that high heaven where sinless Thou dost shine,
To draw us sinners in,

Come lest this heart should, cold and cast away,
Die ere the guest adored she entertain—
Lest eyes which never saw Thine earthly day
Should miss Thy heavenly reign.[1]

The Headship.

Eph. i. 22.—'Christ . . . the head over all things to the Church.'

1. 'Christ . . . the head over all things to the Church'—that is a statement of Church polity which every Churchman, lay or cleric, would regard as indisputable. Is it, in fact, an accurate description of the policy and activities of the Church to-day? We affirm our belief that neither Church nor world can conceivably do without Christ. But what steps do we in the Churches take to express that belief in act and deed? We talk glibly of His headship over the Church; how far does the Church, in concrete fact, recognize Him and treat Him as Head? Can we say that, forsaking all other issues, the Church devotes its main energies to the things which Jesus Christ clearly regards as being of supreme importance? Can we resist the impression that the Church is spending much of its energy without adequate reference to the mind and purposes of the true Head of the Church?

(1) Take two instances. One is what we may call the over-complex and over-organized institutionalism of the Church. No one would deny that the Church is meant to be an institution, or that it should organize itself properly. But the Head of the Church, if we are to judge by what He said and did on earth, cannot have intended it to be a self-centred institution or to spend most of its energies in organizing its own existence. But that, in point of fact, is what is happening. An altogether disproportionate amount of time and labour is spent on the complex details of administration. We cannot see the wood for the trees. There is all too little to remind us what these ant-like activities are really *for*, what objective the Church is supposed to be pursuing. It is as if a battalion or brigade should perfect, to the last polish, the organizing of its peace establishment, and gradually lose all idea of ever getting to grips with the enemy. The metaphor does not exaggerate the position. As a Church we are not organized for war: we are not over eager for close and biting contact with the stark realities of evil. We are engrossed in other things; like the London church heard of the other day which, with a great struggle, has to find £500 a year to pay for its music alone.

(2) Another instance of our ecclesiastical disregard of the Head of the Church is to be found in the unchristian prevalence, in the Church, of party feeling and party activity. 'Parties,' in one sense, there must be and should be: that is, the full life of the Church ought always to be fed and enriched by very different streams of Christian thought and Christian experience. But parties in the sense of groups of like-minded religious people claiming, in effect, to have a monopoly of truth, and striving, by all sorts of means, to make their particular point of view predominant in the Church—parties, in this sense, are utterly alien from the mind of Christ, and constitute a grave menace to the true well-being of the Church.

¶ One of the greatest sins of which the churches and sects, with few exceptions, have been more or less guilty, is the sin of intolerance and exclusiveness, which springs from the selfishness of the human heart. They vainly imagine that they possess the monopoly of truth and piety and have, in their polemics, exhausted the vocabulary of reproach and vituperation. . . . Religious persecution beginning with the crucifixion is the darkest, we may well say, the satanic chapter in church history, though it has been overruled by Providence for the progress of religious truth and liberty; for the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. . . . We look hopefully for the reunion of Christendom and a feast of reconciliation of churches, but it will be preceded by an act of general humiliation. All must confess, 'We have sinned and erred; Christ

[1] Jean Ingelow.

alone is pure and perfect.' . . . The evil lies not in denominationalism and confessionalism, but in sectarianism, which is an abuse of denominationalism and is nothing but extended selfishness —the spirit of the Pharisee who boasts of his righteousness, and thanks God that he is better than the publican.[1]

2. What would be involved in a reassertion in the Church of the absolute supremacy of Jesus Christ? What actual difference would it make? It would, of course, make an enormous difference in tone, in atmosphere, in the quality of the Church's common life. And it would certainly express itself in a revision of values. We should get a truer sense of proportion, and learn to put *first things first.* What are these first things?

(1) *Evangelism*—the plain duty of propagating Christianity, of spreading the glorious tidings of the love of God in Christ. Here is the very thing for which the Church primarily exists—to give Christ to a desperately needy world, to extend the sway of the Kingdom of God. Is the Church doing it? Are our churches and congregations continually increasing their membership by winning new adherents? Is the Christian Society making due progress in Christianizing England, Europe, the world? Amid all the demands on the Church to contribute to the moral needs of the time, is the Church loyal and devoted in making her own supreme and peculiar contribution, the contribution of *providing more and more Christians* to live in, and alter, the world of to-day? Who can answer such questions with an unhesitating affirmative? And yet, if Christ mattered most to us all, we should break clean away from all our petty religious distractions to go campaigning with Him and for Him. And men *want Him.* There are millions of men and women to-day who are hungry for spiritual things, and are wistfully, many of them, groping after Christ; and again and again they fail to find Him in organized religion. That's the pity of it. The Church is so busy with its own affairs that it cannot pay heed to their inarticulate murmurings; and so, all the while, the greatest spiritual opportunity in history is passing by us unregarded and unseized.

Thank God, there are, at last, some signs of fresh evangelistic enterprise. But it needs to be pointed out that effective evangelism will not be achieved by a sonorous repetition of ancient shibboleths. We have got to see afresh for ourselves, and to make other men see, that God is like Jesus Christ, and that, therefore, He is Love and has nothing to do with force of any kind. We shall never evangelize effectively unless we are making, and men see that we are making, adventurous experiments in living by the law of Christ. We shall never make much impression on our generation as long as the world thinks, and has cause to think, that the Church is not making a serious attempt to practise the gospel which it preaches.

(2) *Unity.*—A return to Christ would involve for the Churches a drastic alteration of their whole attitude towards unity and reunion. Indeterminate negotiations and indecisive bargainings will continue for ever unless the Churches concerned can recover and act upon Christ's great law of self-renunciation—'Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.' We do lip service to this principle. We press it upon individuals. We urge it upon classes and nations as the only final solution of social and international difficulties. Why cannot we act upon it in our mutual relations as Churches? Why, if we are Christ's, must we imitate the world in its struggle for power, in its strife as to who shall be the greatest? If Christ were really treated as Head by all the Churches, we should never be satisfied, in our mutual relations, with a mere passive toleration; we should hunt out ways to help each other's work, and, above all, we should each be prepared for any measure of sacrifice if so we could come together again in the rich oneness which God means us to have.

A great Christian thinker of to-day points out that 'The ideal type of institution for a

[1] D. S. Schaff, *The Life of Philip Schaff*, 352.

religion like Christianity would be one which was entirely indifferent to its own fortunes as an institution, and prepared at any moment to die in order to live. The distribution of its energies would be the reverse of that which now obtains. Nearly all would go into the attack upon the gloom, misery and ignorance of the world; next to nothing would go into the defence of vested interests, whether they take the form of creeds, property, power, position or prestige.'[1]

The Church The Fulfilment of Christ.

Eph. i. 22, 23.—'The church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all'.

When St. Paul declares in Eph. i. 23 that the Church is the *pleroma* or 'fulness' of the Christ, he would appear to mean that in some mysterious sense the Church is that without which the Christ is not complete, but with which He is complete. That is to say, he looks upon the Christ as in a sense waiting for completeness, and destined in the purpose of God to find that completeness in the Church.

The metaphor which the Apostle has just used leads directly up to this statement. Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His Body. Now, is it not true that in a certain sense the Body is the *pleroma* of the Head? Is the Head complete without the Body? Can we even think of a head as performing its functions without a body? In the sense, then, in which the Body is the fulness or completion of the Head, it is clear that with St. Paul we may think of the Church as the fulness or completion of the Christ.

Even now, in the imperfect stage of the Church, we can see that this is true. The Church is that through which Christ lives on and works on, here below on earth. Jesus, the Christ incarnate, is no longer on earth as He was. His feet and hands no longer move and work in our midst, as once they moved and wrought in Palestine. But St. Paul affirms that He is not without feet and hands on earth, the Church is His Body. Through the Church, which St. Paul refuses to think of as separate from Him, He still lives and moves among men.[1]

This is a wonderful figure—the Church, the body of Christ. That is to say, what our Lord's hands and feet, His voice and smile, His brain and heart were to Him in the days of His flesh, His Church is now. It is scarcely necessary to say that the word 'Church' in this passage is at once a wider and a narrower term than when used to denote a body of people worshipping in a particular place. The Church which is Christ's body knows no limits of territory or nationality, of language or class. It is indeed catholic. Many sheep He has which are not of our fold, or of any visible fold. And yet it is narrower than almost any single church, for membership in a visible church does not constitute membership in the Church which is His body. Members of that Church are such as are living in vital union with Jesus Christ. And yet this is the ideal for each local church—to express its Lord as faithfully to its neighbourhood as the great invisible Church is expressing Him to the world; nay, as perfectly as His own body expressed His mind and will when He was on earth.

How could our Lord have shown men what God was like, how could He have gone about doing good, have proved His love to the uttermost, without His body? How ready were those hands to minister! 'He stretched forth his hand, and touched him.' 'He blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them.' 'He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.' How ready were they to suffer too! How willing were those feet to grow weary in service! 'He must needs go through Samaria . . . and therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.' 'And he went . . . throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out devils.' They also endured the Cross. Think, too, how marvellously that voice expressed His thoughts, from the win-

[1] E. S. Woods, in *The Challenge*, May 5, 1922.

[1] J. A. Robinson, in *The Expositor*, 5th ser., vii. 250.

some tones of welcome: 'Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest,' and the tender cadences of sympathy: 'Thy brother shall rise again,' to the loud note of authority: 'Lazarus, come forth!' And the angry word of rebuke: 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' We should have liked to hear that voice with its wonderful inflections, but far more to see the shine and shade on that Divine countenance—the radiance that followed communion with His Father; the smile that greeted little children; the expression of that love and yearning which the words, 'He was moved with compassion,' denote; the set face, too, of determination, the stern face of denunciation, the sad, sad, face in the presence of hopeless impenitence. Yes, Christ needed His body to express Himself; and now that He is glorified, He needs His Church, which is His body, for this purpose.

It is a great and solemn thought that we, the members of His Church, have entrusted to us this high and sacred calling—that apart from us our Lord lacks the means adequately to express His will and love to the world. There are still prodigals in the far country, and the Father's heart still yearns over them; but it is for us to show them that heart. We are to see them afar off, we are to be moved with compassion, to run, to welcome them, to reinstate them, putting on the robe, the ring, the shoes. We are to arrange for their comfort and well-being. That is, we are to be the eye and ear, the heart and brain, the feet and hands, the voice and smile of our Lord and Master. We are to show men that God loves them, is ready to forgive, is plenteous in mercy. We, in Christ's stead, are to beseech them to be reconciled to God. God needs us. All work in field and factory enforces that truth. We are co-workers with Him. He has chosen to honour man by sharing with him the responsibility and blessedness of feeding a hungry world, not only with earthly bread, but with the bread eternal.

¶ George Eliot emphasizes the importance—nay, the necessity—of man's part, in her poem on Stradivarius. The great violin-maker says:—

'The masters only know whose work is good:
They will choose mine, and while God gives them skill
I give them instruments to play upon,
God choosing me to help Him.'
'What! were God
At fault for violins, thou absent?'
'Yes;
He were at fault for Stradivari's work.'

That is the great truth: God chooses us to help Him, Christ needs us to reveal Him.[1]

Dead in Sins.

Eph. ii. 1-3.—'And you did he quicken, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein aforetime ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.'

In the first chapter of the Epistle, St. Paul has had before his eyes the glory of God's redemptive work—the wonder of His purpose of pure love for the universe through the Church. His imagination has kindled at the thought of the length, the breadth, the height of the Divine operation: the length, for it is an eternal purpose slowly worked out through the ages; the breadth, for it is to extend over the whole universe; the height, for it is to carry men up to no lower point than the throne of Christ in the heavenly places. But now he stops to draw the attention of his converts to what we may call a 'fourth dimension' of the Divine operation—its depth. How wonderfully low God had stooped in order to reach the point to which man had sunk! The Asiatic Christians are bidden to ponder anew, and in contrast to their present experience, the life which they had once lived before they knew Christ or were found in Him.

¶ In this chapter *St. Paul* is the remembrancer to the *Ephesians*, and reades them a lecture of their badnesse, before their calling

[1] P. D. Cleaves.

and conversion; and surely such thoughts are right profitable to *Christians,* to call to minde how bad they were whilst they were wilde *Olives,* before they were ingrafted into *Christ*: for first it will raise their thankfulnesse to *God;* What am I, or what is my father's house, that thou shouldst bring me hither? it will make us pay one tribute of praise more full, more freely, when we consider if we be vessels of honour, it is no difference in the *clay,* but in the pleasure of the *Potter.* Secondly, it is excellent physick against the pleasure of pride, to let our souls bloud with the consideration how bad we have been; he that will not confesse his former badnesse, I suspect his present goodnesse, whether he hath any or not. Lastly, it will make us both pity the present wofull estate of wicked men, and hope well, and pray heartily for their future conversion; why should we fear that arm of *God* should be too short for others, that could reach us? Thinke not that we are the last lost sheep that shall ever be found. *The most crooked tree will make timber for the temple, if God pleaseth to hew it.*[1]

1. *The Death.*—There are passages of Scripture where 'death' is used as a strong term to denote a comparatively lifeless state of the regenerate soul, needing (if it is to be escaped) not new birth, which is a thing once accomplished, but revival. But this modified sense of 'death' must not be allowed to lower the absolute sense in a passage like this, with its peculiar doctrinal emphasis on the contrast of death and life. The state here described is not one of suppressed life, but of absence of life.

As it is with the departed saints sleeping in Christ—'put to death, indeed, in the flesh, but living in the spirit,' so by a terrible inversion is it with the wicked in this life. They are put to death, indeed, in the spirit, while they live in the flesh. They may be, and often are, powerfully alive and active in their relations to the world of sense, while on the unseen and Godward side they are utterly paralysed. Ask such a man about his business or family concerns; touch on affairs of politics or trade—and you deal with a living mind, its powers and susceptibilities awake and alert. But let the conversation pass to other themes; sound flict—and you strike a note to which there is what he thinks of Christ, how he stands towards God, how he fares in the spiritual conflict—and you strike a note to which there is no response. You have taken him out of his element. He is a practical man, he tells you; he does not live in the clouds, or hunt after shadows; he believes in hard facts, in things that he can grasp and handle. 'The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him.' They are pictures to the eye of the blind, heavenly music to the stone-deaf.

2. *The Cause of this Death.*—The disease of which the Ephesians had died was sin. St. Paul speaks as if they had never been alive until they were made alive in Christ. They were 'by nature children of wrath,' he says. But he also tells them that they were dead 'in trespasses and sins'—definite acts of transgression.

What are the forms in which sin appears? What are the deadening ministries which create this appalling condition? The Apostle mentions three: 'the course of this world,' 'the prince of the power of the air,' and 'the lusts of our flesh.' These are the three mighty forces ever at work upon the lives of men, producing paralysis of the higher powers, benumbing and impairing the finer sensitiveness, and sinking all the worthy things in the life to degradation and death. They cover the whole range of human temptation due to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

(1) Here is the first of the deadening ministries—'the course of this world.' And is there anything more deadening than the ordinary course and custom of the present world? Look at the world's way of thinking. How deadening is its influence upon the perceptions of the spirit! The thinking of the world always runs on low planes. It is ever in search of compromise. There is nothing lofty or ideal in its aim and purpose.

[1] Thomas Fuller, *Collected Sermons,* ii. 503.

It seeks purely temporal and transient ends. No man can come under the influence of the world's manner of thought without losing the fine edge of his spiritual powers, and rendering himself insensible to the glorious things of the Spirit. And look at the world's way of speaking. It substitutes gossip for gospel. Its conversation is not seasoned with salt. There is nothing in it to preserve it from corruption. No man can put himself under the influence of the course of the world's speech without reducing his powers of spiritual apprehension. Let a man spend the entire day under the corrupting ministry of worldly speech, and in the evening time he will find that the difficulty of communing with God is incredibly increased. And look at the world's way of doing. The course of this world is always egotistic, emphasizing the interests of self; it is therefore always combative, assuming an attitude of antagonism to one's brother. Now, all these are deadening influences. They work upon the loftier powers of man in sheer destructiveness, and bring his better self to ruin. Men are degraded and sunk into spiritual death by 'the course of this world.'

¶ We are warned against a world with which, it is declared, the Christian can have no fellowship. He must renounce it entirely. This is a hard saying, and, indeed, an incomprehensible one until we understand that this world against which we must battle stands for human life in so far as it refuses to acknowledge spiritual values and leaves God out of its reckoning. It has its religion, but it is a worship of idols. It has its code of honour, but it holds that the worst sin is to be found out. It has its fellowship, but it is founded on a watchful hold of what makes for each man's own gain. It has no true ideals, no wide horizons, no pure light of heaven shines on its affairs. God is not in all its thoughts.

Worse than all, this world of human convention has no future. It ends with itself. Its culture, wealth, art, skill, have their splendours, but they end in vacuity and darkness, and there they leave its devotees. A man can take nothing with him from this world when he sets out on that last mysterious journey from which there is no return. It may suggest to its successful servants the promise of survival in the memory of others, forgetting that human memory quickly fades and the past soon vanishes into nothingness. It has no hope for the individual. We need not wonder that the world's philosophy is inevitably pessimistic.[1]

(2) The second of the deadening ministries is 'the prince of the power of the air.' We are confronted with a personal power, who is ever at work in the realm of evil suggestion and desire. There is a great leader in the hierarchy of evil spirits. He is the antagonist of men's welfare, and seeks to destroy the finer faculties by which they hold communion with God. He is 'the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience.' When some little flame of carnal desire is kindled in the life, 'the prince of the power of the air' blows upon it, and seeks to fan it into fierce and destructive fire. Who has not experienced his influence? It is painfully marvellous how the spark of evil-thinking so speedily becomes a devouring heat! The prince of the power of the air is ever at work blowing upon these incipient fires, in order that in the intense heat of a greater conflagration he may scorch and burn up the furniture of the soul.

¶ He is a Prince of the Power of the *air*. What does this mean? First and most chiefly the word has a metaphorical meaning. It sets before you the diffusiveness, the penetratingness, the universality of the power which Satan exercises. You talk of the velocity of sound as it travels upon the air, or of the velocity of light as it is transmitted by the ether. These analogies will guide us as to what the phrase teaches here. So, again, we speak of a polluted air—of an air laden with infection. If the air is laden with infection, do what you will you cannot bar out the mischief. Door and window are closed in vain against the tainted air. What is in the air will find you, spite of bars and bolts. The tiniest crevice will admit it. So, again, the air gives the idea of universality

[1] *Life's True Values*, Selected Essays from 'The Times,' i. 216.

so far as the earth is concerned. You may go to the Antipodes, but it is the same air you breathe, though under different stars and with a different climate. The air is everywhere. So the phrase tells you that, while we are in this sin-laden world, we cannot escape the range of Satan's influence, or the presence of his legions. We are ever in their midst. Poured out around us as is the air we breathe, they are ever with us. Our hourly existence is one perpetual exposure to the wicked spirits with whom we have to fight.

(3) The third of these deadening ministries is 'the lusts of our flesh'—the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Trace the temptation from the first vile thought suggested by some book or companion, on through the cherishing, the fondling of that thought, the recurrence to it in weak moments; on through the opportunity, the fall, the first great reaction, when shame and self-respect and all God's forces rise up; and then the bitter folly of the self-chosen temptation, the places and persons that are too powerful in their influences—till the death sets in—the death that leaves its mark on expression and feature, the death that works so persistently, that pollutes imagination and heart alike; the death that makes gulfs of ice between the man or the woman and all pure love and all sweet and tender affection; the death that slays souls by its looks, and poisons by its very presence; the death that becomes so blind that it can see no virtue and believe in no purity; the death that loathes itself and wishes itself alive again, and yet seems impelled—forced along to do the sins it loathes.

¶ Follow out the growth of one sin where its consequences are very manifest, very easy to trace; look at the death in life of the drunkard. He begins full of life, full of strength, full of manly power; he begins in the charm, the activity, the glory, the freshness of youth; by and by he falls into the sin of excess, he is led into it by evil companions, he is shamed into it by foolish raillery, or he is drawn into it by an unhealthy physical craving. He thinks at first he has found new life; a life in which his pulses beat faster and his imagination is brighter; but it is a hideous parody of life—a life that is no life, a mirage that fades into physical misery and mental shame. In reality he has let death in and it is working its way into his blood gradually but surely. First the symbols go; the activity wanes, the strength is sapped, the muscles relax, all that binds and holds fast his strength crumbles away. Then he 'goes to pieces,' in our expressive language; the hands begin to tremble, the eyes grow dim, the brain becomes besotted, and at last a bloated mass of corruption is all that is left of that strong life of promise, all that remains of the once agile frame. Rottenness creeps over him, even while he is alive; he is a living corpse. That is what you see and mourn over and strive to prevent; but there is far worse behind. Think of the inner life of the drunkard. First common-sense crumbles and is destroyed, and a reckless acceptance of misery takes its place. Love and honour go next; an insatiable craving that has no feeling for wife or child takes the place of all the highest impulses of his nature. The home breaks up; the symbols go, the sheltering roof, the cheerful fireside, the clothes and food, and then, worse still, the realities go; the mutual affection, the respect, the happy family union all go, for there is death within.[1]

3. *The Quickening.*—'Dead through your trespasses and sins . . . you did he quicken.' The transition is like passing from a graveyard into a sweet meadow in which the children are playing! But this illustration is very imperfect, and in order to make it in any way an adequate analogy of the Apostle's thought we must conceive the transformation of the graveyard itself. The graveyard must be converted into a sweet and winsome meadow, and its dead must emerge from their grave clothes in the brightness and buoyancy of little children. It is not a transition from the cemetery to the sweet pastures; it is the transformation of the graveyard itself. 'Dead through your trespasses and sins . . . you did he quicken'! Or we may change the figure and regard it as the passing of winter into

[1] R. Eyton, *The Search for God*, 130.

spring. There is winter; cold, bare, flowerless and fruitless. Then there is a feeling of spring in the air. Everything is vitalized and begins to manifest the signs of growth and increase, and we behold the welcome beauties of the genial season. And here is another winter; 'dead through your trespasses and sins.' Everything is cold, insensitive, barren. And then comes the vital breath, the vitalizing wind of the Spirit—'you did he quicken.' The once dead life begins to manifest evidences of the quickening, and clothes itself with the beauty and glory of the Lord.

The quickening is sometimes a painful experience to the one who is being revived. They say that when a drowning man is brought to shore, and is resuscitated, the renewed flow of life, as the blood-current rushes again through the half-dead and contracted channels, is attended by spasms of agony. And in the life of the spirit the awakening is often a time of keen unrest and pain. But it is only a 'growing pain,' and is significant of spiritual recreation and expansion. We are acquiring a new sensitiveness toward God and man, and a new capacity for both joy and pain. 'And hath raised us up with him.' We are not only quickened, we are lifted out of our graves. We are taken away from the place where we have been lying, the realm of tyranny where we have been enslaved.

The Soul's Resurrection.

Eph. ii. 1.—'And you (lit. 'you, too,') did he quicken.'

'And you, too'—such is the meaning of the Greek phrase. To get the connection we have to skip back over the ecstatic digression into which Paul is led by his thought of the risen and enthroned Lord and to pick up the thread of the argument at the twentieth verse of the previous chapter. There the writer is speaking of the power which raised Jesus from the dead; and the idea persists through the digression and emerges again here. The power which raised Jesus from the dead is also the power which raises men from the death of sin.

1. 'And you, *too* . . .'. This is no mere analogy, as though the Resurrection of Jesus were only a type or illustration of what God does for men's souls. It is another characteristic manifestation of the same power, which quickens into life in whatever sphere it acts. The God with whom we have to do is a God of resurrections. That is His peculiar quality.

At first sight it does not appear as though there were a real parity between the case of Jesus and that of the soul. Jesus was raised from actual physical death; but to speak of death in relation to the unregenerate soul is surely only a figure of speech. St. Paul uses the word 'dead' bluntly and without qualification. He does not mince matters, and he was really transcribing his own experience. He remembered what he had been; he knew what he had become; and the only sufficient way of describing the difference was by saying that once he was dead and now he was alive. Men who fear being buried alive often insert in their wills a provision that their dead bodies shall be subjected to certain tests before interment. They prescribe the application of certain *stimuli;* and if the body does not react to these, then it is known to be truly dead. That is how death is known—it is a condition in which the body has ceased to react to the ordinary *stimuli* of life; and when Paul describes the state of the unregenerate soul as death, he means that it is insensible to what he had come to know to be the true *stimuli* of real life.

And, properly understood, the resurrection of a dead soul is no smaller marvel than the Resurrection of Jesus. It does at least require the exercise of the same power to accomplish it. It belongs to the same cycle of miracle. Easter in the soul is as Divine a work as Easter in Joseph's garden. It seems a curious anomaly that men should doubt the Resurrection when they may see around them at any time a succession of no less authentic resurrections in the conversion of men. That men's lives should be turned upside down so that they come to hate the things they loved, and to love what once they hated, is a phenomenon not to be explained by the subtlety of psy-

chological analysis. It would be a thing by itself, if we did not know what happened in a garden tomb on an Easter morning. That is the class to which it belongs. The characteristic process of Nature may be creative evolution; the primary process of grace is creative revolution.

2. Nor is this miracle of resurrection performed once for all; He who raised us from the dead is continually raising us. It is one of the astonishing attributes of the Christian life that it is amenable to endless renewal; and it is well for us that it is so. The life of the Christian is not a steady ascent; it is—if it could be reduced to a graph—more like an average barometric chart, a thing of ups and downs. The saints and geniuses of the spiritual life have a great deal to say about what some of them call 'dry seasons.' Johann Tauler, Thomas à Kempis, Santa Teresa, Madame Guyon, all alike tell us of periods in which God's face seemed to be withdrawn from them, when their spirits were arid and sterile, their spiritual impulses flickering and uncertain, when they had lost all sensitiveness to the normal stimuli of the spiritual life. For these times of depression there are many reasons—partly within us, partly without. They vary in intensity and in duration; and none of us ever escapes them. Not the saintliest soul has ever remained unbrokenly on Mount Pisgah; the best of us make not infrequent and always unwelcome excursions into the valleys of twilight and despondency. But there is one thing which is universally true concerning the 'dry season'—it always comes to an end. Easter comes round again to the soul; and the dark clouds disappear. New hope, new joy, new triumph, come to it—as it stands renewed and transfigured in the vivifying light of grace. And surely this is what we should expect, since the God we trust is a God of resurrection.

And even when the soul's declension has been voluntary, it is still within the range of this renovating grace if it but return to God; and in some ways the backslider's welcome is the most amazing turn in the workings of God's love. That one who of his own choice has put his light out should be permitted to rekindle it, nay, should be invited to rekindle it in the flame that he had spurned is surely the supreme triumph of mercy. But the genius of God's love is that it will not let us go, and God is ready, even longs, to exercise His power of renewal on any object that comes within its reach. Renewal is the joy of God.[1]

When the clouds so soft and tender
Float upon the smiling blue,
Lord, our heart, that old offender,
Asks that it may serve anew.

Winter now his sword is sheathing,
And the warring winds are still,
Thou upon our hearts are breathing
And they lose constraint and chill.

Shall our hearts be dull and cheerless?
O, forbid it mercy's powers;
Lord, we lowly will, yet fearless,
Look Thee in the face like flowers.

When of days like these returning
We with gentle sorrow think,
Days of holy hope and yearning,
Lord, from facing Thee we shrink.

Yet, though former flowers were blighted,
Wilt Thou present ones reject?
Let not offerings new be sighted;
O, forgive our past neglect.[2]

[1] R. Roberts, in *Record of Christian Work*, April 1917, p. 208f.
[2] T. T. Lynch, *The Rivulet*, 76.

ATMOSPHERE.

Eph. ii. 2.—'The prince of the power of the air.'
Acts ii. 2.—'A sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind.'

Here, in these two texts, we have two forces at work by the same means. The Lord of Evil rules the Power of the Air, and God the Holy Spirit comes as the wind comes, so that the air is full of Him. These phrases are a good deal more than figures of speech. Spiritual influence may not be conveyed by what the scientist understands as the 'air'—the mixture of gases among which we live—but 'spiritual atmosphere' is not a figure of speech. It is as real a thing as a draught or a puff of smoke. You cannot see it; but paradoxically it is easily perceptible. And even when we do not perceive it, it affects us.

The atmosphere in which we live is something that touches and affects us at every inch of our superficies, and at every moment of our life. It is not to say merely that we breathe it; but that it exerts upon every part of us, inner and outer, an influence which never ceases, and which, though possibly not much marked at the time, produces in the long-run a very great and decided effect. We draw in the air from ague-laden fens, and we do not find anything very particular in each breath we draw. But let us breathe that, and live in that, for a few weeks or months, and we shall see what will come to us. In the same way, sensitively to feel the moral influences amid which we live—the moral influences arising from external Nature, or from the dwelling in which we live, or from the people with whom we associate, or from the books, and newspapers, and magazines, and reviews we read—is to feel the moral atmosphere. And a very great part of the influence which moulds human character, and decides human destiny, is of this vague yet pervading kind. A tree draws the chief part of its nourishment from the air—very much more than it draws from the earth through its roots. The tree must have roots, or it would not live or grow at all: yet the multitude of leaves draw in that by which it mainly lives and grows. And it seems to be so with human beings. We must be morally rooted and grounded, as it were, by direct education, and by principles fixed in our minds. But after this is done, we take our tone mainly from the moral atmosphere. We are affected mainly by moral currents; and just as really when we strive against them as when we yield to them.

1. Moral and spiritual atmosphere *is a real force*.—An American doctor says that 'Experience proves that nothing exerts so great an influence on the psychical organism as the moral atmosphere which is breathed by it.' And the best teaching of modern science on the subject leads us to believe that personality is not, as used to be imagined, a fixed quantity, something that is divided by hard and fast and impassable barriers from other personalities. In deep and imperfectly understood ways we are all 'members one of another.' We say there are people who 'create an atmosphere.' There certainly are. Somehow, influences set in motion by one personality are absorbed by another with whom they come in contact. We have only very imperfect ideas of how it happens, but it does happen. Influences set in motion by one personality are capable of invading other personalities in all sorts of curious ways. We can be invaded, for instance, by another man's fear. A handful of people in a crowd, thoroughly frightened, can produce a panic. We catch another man's gloom as really as we catch another man's influenza. We are infected by another man's gaiety, in more subtle ways than by the inflection of his voice, or the twinkle in his eye.

¶ He was very fond of speaking about 'creating an atmosphere.' Now this is what he did. I was speaking but yesterday to one who met him only a few times, and he said, 'I never

knew any one who created such an atmosphere of Christlike love as your father.'[1]

¶ 'No man,' said a soldier of the time, 'ever entered Mr. Pitt's room who did not feel himself braver when he came out than when he went in.'[2]

¶ You enter a certain house, you talk to the people in it. You at once feel oppressed. You feel stupid; worse than that you feel sore and cantankerous. You feel you are growing low-minded. Anything like magnanimity or generosity goes out of you. You listen to wretched sneers against everything that is good or elevating. You feel a series of miserable little doings and misdoings dwelt upon with weary iteration and bitter exaggeration. You hear base motives suggested as having really prompted the best people you know to their best doings. Did you not feel that (morally) you were breathing the atmosphere of a sewer or a pigsty? And even when the atmosphere was not so bad as that, you have known the houses of really excellent folk which were pervaded by such a stiffness, such an unnatural repression of all natural feeling, such a sense of constraint of soul, that when you fairly got out of the house at last, you would have liked to express your relief, and to give way to your pent-up energies, by wildly dancing on the pavement before the door like a Red Indian.[3]

¶ The study of the psychology of the crowd is being pursued in these days by an increasing number of thinkers, who fully recognize the influence exercised by the collective conscience on the individual conscience. One of the outstanding phenomena of the collective conscience is its power to swamp and submerge individual conscience and to induce the individual to co-operate in common action which in his individual conduct his conscience would condemn. A boy who would think it stealing to rob an orchard alone regards it as a glorious enterprise to do so with half a dozen bold companions. A young man who has received a Puritan training in a country town, as a member of a circle in which the Puritan atmosphere prevails, goes to London, or a provincial city, and very soon the influence of the mass, in a shop or office, melts away his moral scruples and with 'the troop' he will indulge in habits and attend places which amid his home surroundings he regarded as disreputable.[1]

2. Moral and spiritual atmosphere *does much to mould our personalities for good or evil.*—Even the physical atmosphere does this to a certain extent. Between man and his environment there is the most constant and active relation and reaction. Food and air have much to do with man's mental and moral life. Some of the pessimistic and jaundiced doctrines of the Church may be due to a disordered liver. Experiments in reformatories show that the worst incorrigibles have been subdued and changed when they were taught to bathe and exercise properly, and when they were fed on nourishing and proper food. Many a man who shows traits of moral deficiency and errancy is suffering quite as severely from mal-nutrition and starved lungs as from moral perversity and vicious disposition. And a good deal of truth underlies Lyman Beecher's famous remark that 'of course he believed in the perseverance of the saints—except when the wind was from the east.'

But the influence of the spiritual atmosphere, though less immediately perceptible, is stronger still. Of course different people respond differently to the same atmosphere. Partly, no doubt, it is a matter of sensitiveness. A coarse-natured man may sprawl bored or cynically amused in a church that seems full of a brooding presence of holiness. Partly it is a matter of self-control, as when a sensitive man in a panic-stricken mob has a sufficiently clear head and strong grip of himself to remain cool and perhaps restore the sanity of those around him. Partly also it is a

[1] *Love and Life: The Story of J. Denholm Brash* (by his son), 193.
[2] J. M. Gibbon, *The Veil and the Vision*, 188.
[3] *The Commonplace Philosopher in Town and Country*, 98, 99.

[1] H. Jeffs, *Concerning Conscience*, 250.

matter of habit, but here the difference is more apparent than real.

When we first enter a new moral atmosphere, we feel it very keenly. But we grow less sensitive to it daily, as we become accustomed to it. It may be producing its moral effect as really; but we are not so much aware of its presence. We cannot escape it. It pervades business, politics, pleasure, even the Churches. It acts powerfully upon our feeling, our judgments, our conduct.

Sometimes the effect is deteriorating if not disastrous to the individual character. The best of men in home life and Church life are insensibly drawn into acquiescence in ethical standards that will certainly not bear the light of a fully instructed and highly sensitive Christian conscience. The subtlety and intensity of the danger is due mainly to its invisibility—we do not realize that it is there.

Mr. Newbolt says very wisely: 'Moral danger, when there is danger, comes not from what is startling, what is called shocking, but from what is insidious. That which shocks, whether good or evil, calls forth a natural resistance: that which permeates does not, though it may be the most powerful influence in a life and the most indelible. What is really infecting is an infected atmosphere; the Censor wastes his time in striking out an indecorous word or scene in a play. It is not indecorum which is harmful, but contact with a base or vulgar mind; and the vulgarity of an author is dangerous in every page of his work.'[1]

On the other hand the atmosphere may be one which conduces to nobility of life. The most refined mysticism, the most exalted spiritual experience, is partly a product of the social and intellectual environment in which the personal life of the mystic has formed and matured. There are no experiences of any sort which are independent of preformed expectations or unaffected by the prevailing beliefs of the time. Every bit of our inner or outer life, however much it is our own, is shot through with lines of colour due to social and racial suggestions. All our ideals of goodness, all our instantaneous decisions of conscience, our most inward light, and our most instinctive wisdom, have come to be what they are because we have been organic with our particular social group at this identical period of human history.

¶ Never was a man more susceptible to the atmosphere around him. He simply could not live in a hostile air. He could be overborne by views of religion which in fact were not really his. Though he had plenty of courage, and could stand by a losing cause, his thoughts did not flourish in inhospitable soils or chilling winds. For his work he needed the warm and sunny consciousness of sympathy. He could face contradiction and opposition, but not the steady environment of antagonism. It followed that when he was played upon by crossing influences his real power was to a considerable extent paralysed.[1]

There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object that he look'd upon,
that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the
day for a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of
years.

The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass and white and red morning-
glories, and white and red clover, and the
song of the phoebe-bird.
And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms
and the fruit afterward, and wood-ber-
ries, and the commonest weeds by the road,
And the old drunkard staggering home from
the outhouse of the tavern whence he had
lately risen,
And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her
way to the school,
And the friendly boys that pass'd, and the
quarrelsome boys,
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls, and
the barefoot negro boy and girl,
And all the changes of city and country
wherever he went.

[1] W. R. Nicoll, *Ian Maclaren*, 9.

[1] *A New Study of English Poetry*, 292.

The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the supper-table,
The mother with mild words, clean cap and gown, a wholesome odour falling off her person and clothes as she walks by,
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, anger'd, unjust,
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure,
The family usages, the language, the company, the furniture, the yearning and swelling heart.[1]

3. Moral and spiritual atmosphere *is made by the people who live in it.*—We do not merely draw from it. We also contribute to it, and it is here that perhaps the chief significance of our life exhibits itself. We are pouring out powers that create or destroy. If waves of force, flowing from physical centres, flash, as we know they do, through atmospheres, and penetrate every form of matter, who shall estimate the effect of the forces emanating from our spirit centres, that beat upon our brother's thought and will? The more energetic of the race diffuse a moral atmosphere; the ordinary members of the race feel it. The energetic give the tone; the ordinary take it. There are minds whose nature is to give out; and minds whose nature is to take in.

But it is not only the very vital people who do this. We all do it to a certain extent. Most men have energy enough, if rightly directed, to affect the air somewhat; and though the moral ingredient they yield may not be much in quantity, it may be able to supply just the precious ozone. We know people within whose influence we feel cheerful, amiable, hopeful, equal to anything. Oh, for that blessed power, and for God's grace to exercise it rightly! Is there a more enviable gift than the energy to sway others to good; to diffuse around us an atmosphere of cheerfulness, piety, truthfulness, generosity, magnanimity? It is not a matter of great talent; not entirely a matter of great energy; but rather of earnestness and honesty—and of that quiet, constant energy which is like soft rain gently penetrating the soil. It is rather a grace than a gift; and we all know where grace is to be had freely for the asking.

One of the chief purposes of Prayer is to give our spirits a sorely needed change of air. It is a way of escape into a different atmosphere—a hill-top atmosphere, from which we can return, calmed and braced, for our daily tasks. A successful missioner of nearly a quarter of a century's experience says on this point, 'I must have that time with God if I am to have a good time with men. If in the church I am to have the atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit does His grandest work, to have access to the holiest in public prayer, and to have a saving grip over my hearers in preaching, I must first win the victory alone with God.'[1]

This being so, none of us can say that we are unable to do anything to back our prayer of 'Thy kingdom come.' Here is a way in which we can all help the Church in its work of bringing about the Kingdom. The one thing our Church services want to-day is 'atmosphere,' and that, men and women must bring with them. The man who remembers that will not come casually to the House of God. He will not come, or refrain from coming, considering who may, or may not, be in the pulpit. He will not come merely to 'meet God.' He will come to 'bring God.' He will carry to the service, down in the mysterious depth of his personality, the rich results of many meetings with God during the week. He will come in a faith so strong and vibrant that others will catch the infection of its strength, and be touched by the atmosphere it helps to create. It is when many in a service bring rich contributions, the result of their own spiritual adventures and discoveries during the week, that an atmosphere is created in which men's fellowship is with each other, and with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in

[1] Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass.*

[1] T. Waugh, *Twenty-three Years a Missioner*, 82.

the midst of them.' Perhaps these are the most far-reaching words about 'atmosphere' that were ever spoken. There is no 'group-consciousness' so astounding as the 'group-consciousness' of the saints.

The Quickened Conscience.

Eph. ii. 4, 5.—'God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.'

THAT which differentiates Christ from every other teacher of righteousness is that He, not by word but by power, breathed a fresh breath of life into the conscience of men so as to enable them in a larger degree than before to be a law unto themselves.

1. *The Fact.*—It is not by His loving sympathy with every form of human need, or by the ineffable wisdom in which He spake as never man spake, that you must measure the distance between our Lord and every other prophet. The Mosaic law prescribed with marvellous comprehensiveness a minute code of ordinances for every phase of social life. The peculiarity of the gospel is its singular freedom from minute legislation. Destined to be the religion, not of one race but of the whole family of men, not of one generation but of the whole succession of generations to the end, Christianity could not afford to embarrass itself with specific rules for every variety of human existence. How, then, was the comparative lack of rule to be made good? 'You hath he quickened.' Here is the great miracle, greater far than the calling of Lazarus out of the tomb. With the creative breath (the same breath wherewith man had been at the beginning made a living soul) Jesus Christ awoke from its long sleep the dormant conscience, and enthroned it again in the high places of man's spirit—to speak more loudly and advise more truly and guide more certainly.

Even whilst Christ's body hung upon the Cross, we may catch the first stirrings of the new 'conscience' in the confession of the centurion, 'Truly this was the Son of God.' We may see the signs of its awakening as the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned. Hence the acute perception of the early martyrs as to the full bearing of the trivial action, by which, when brought before the magistrates, they were invited to save their lives. Hence the unbroken line of sensitive, self-sacrificing loyalty to whatever is lovely and of good report, which has in every class brightened the darkest ages of the Church with a continued thread of golden light. In this quickening of the conscience by Christ we have the only adequate explanation of the vast moral advance which has signalized everywhere the march of the gospel through the world, and of the remarkable degree in which it has been the result, not of law, but of the sense of individual responsibility. Conversely, in this quickening of the conscience of mankind we may read most plainly, if we will, the presence of One mightier than the sons of men who could thus deal with the innermost depths of human nature, and touch with His vivifying finger the very centre of the spiritual being of man. 'Ye shall know me,' saith the Lord 'when I have brought you up out of your graves.'

¶ One of the most brilliant and noble men of his day was Sir Thomas More. With great difficulty Henry VIII. secured his services. So signal was his ability that he was rapidly promoted from one post to another, until he was in the ministry. He was knighted and became the king's favourite and trusted counsellor.

At last the day came when the king's lust demanded that his ministry recognize his marriage with Katherine as illegal. One barrier after another gave way until More was reached. Then the lecherous sovereign found that the power of the monarchy stopped short at a man's conscience. The king commanded, influential friends pleaded, the king threatened; but against all Sir Thomas More stood firm until he lost his head rather than dishonour his conscience. 'I thank the Lord,' said More, as the boat dropped silently down

the river, 'I thank the Lord that the field is won.' It was the field on which a man dies rather than bend his conscience to a king's bidding.[1]

2. *The Instrument.*—What is the instrumentality by which this quickening of the Christian conscience has been effected? That instrumentality is twofold, external and internal.

(1) The external means will be found in the influence of Christ over life and death. His life is the one life in which no blot, no infirmity of purpose, no wavering of principle, no inequality of character has been found. The fierce glare of eighteen centuries of criticism has been turned upon that majestic Image, and the verdict of His earliest judge has been accepted by those most hostile to His Divine claims, 'I find no fault in this man.' In Him, a famous preacher has said, 'burst upon the world that of which the world had ever dreamed but never saw, entire and perfect purity, spotless integrity. . . . In all the great maze of history you may find some peculiarity carried to excess. We note this in the hot zeal of the sons of Zebedee, the impulsiveness of St. Peter. Not so with Christ. No single department of His human actions overbalanced another. The one sound which has come down from God in perfect beauty is that Life, the unbroken melody of humanity.'

Now we know (some of us, perhaps, by experience) how our own moral sense may be stimulated and uplifted by contact with a friend of unworldly impulses, of strict unswerving conscientiousness, so that even after our parting from such an one our own thought and action have been maintained for a time at a higher level. Even so, when that Image of mingled strength and gentleness, power and suffering, sincerity and wisdom, was unveiled, the conscience of those who gazed throbbed with a quickened pulsation. In Jesus Christ was seen Man as God made Him in the beginning, with an intellect unclouded, affections undistorted, a will unimpaired. Hence St. Paul speaks of Christ as the 'Second Adam.' All between Him and the first Adam were but partial broken likenesses of manhood as designed in the counsels of eternity. In Jesus Christ was seen again Man in the integrity of man's nature, and the conscience of the race, darkened and enfeebled as it had become, recognized the original idea, and kindled anew as it swept before them.

(2) But great as undoubtedly was the power of Christ's own life, it was not the sole means of quickening the human conscience. There was an internal means also. When we read the New Testament we find two distinct moral agencies mentioned—the natural conscience, and the Holy Ghost. When St. Paul speaks of the heathen who knew not the revealed law doing by nature the things contained in the law, he is alluding to the natural conscience. At other times he speaks of being 'led by the Spirit' as 'walking in the Spirit.' We are born, each one, by virtue of our common manhood, with the conscience which is part of our mental constitution. The most degraded heathen tribes are not without it in a measure. But listen to the Divine words, 'I will pray the Father and he shall give you (you my disciples, you who shall be baptized into my name) another Comforter . . . even the Spirit of truth.' Here is a new and glorious element added to man's original nature, and it is the secret of that higher conscience which from the beginning has marked the Kingdom of Christ.

'Conscience' in the disciples of Jesus Christ has been not superseded, but reinforced and invigorated by the Blessed Spirit. Hence come its greater tenderness, its acuter sensibilities. Hence it counsels more perfectly and reproves more masterfully. And hence, too, we believe comes the certainty that there can be no relapse of Christendom to the depth of old heathenism. There have occurred at intervals a seeming revival of the worst days in this or that part of the Church. Deeds of violence and of wrong, even in matters pertaining to religion, have reared their hideous front. It may be so again. But the Christian conscience, quickened by the Spirit of God, can never be wholly

[1] J. I. Vance, *Royal Manhood*, 103.

quenched, since the promise stands, He shall 'abide with you for ever.' Accordingly it invariably reasserts itself after every outbreak of wickedness in the very estimate which is formed of the past criminality, so that the deed of darkness is deprived of its worst consequences, and becomes a warning rather than a precedent to those that come after. And this is that mystery of grace to which St. Paul alludes in the text. You, he tells his Ephesian converts, did He quicken; welding together in you the creative gift and the Pentecostal gift, never even in the individual Christian to be again wholly sundered.[1]

Grace.

Eph. ii. 7.—'The exceeding riches of his grace.'

What is grace? Among the Greeks, who used it long before Christianity took possession of it, it meant originally something which by its attractiveness gives delight—a beautiful figure, a winsome act, a charming manner. Then it came to denote the kindly disposition which finds expression in such outward charm, and became equivalent to loving-kindness or goodwill. There were many beautiful things in the world before Christ, and the world had its own experience of loving-kindness and goodwill. But, for those who came to know Him, Christ eclipsed all that had come before Him. There was nothing in all the world so gracious as His love. There was nothing in their experience so winsome as His revelation of the goodwill of God to sinful men. Nothing ever so charmed and won their hearts as the story of Him who though He was rich yet for their sakes became poor, that they through His poverty might be rich. And they said '*This* is grace,' and ever after that word conveyed first and foremost to the Christian mind the thought of God in Christ coming down to the lowest level of human need in order that men might have everlasting life.

[1] J. R. Woodford, in *The Cambridge Review*, iv. Supp. No. 79.

There is another word which some may think might have sufficed to describe this wonderful thing—the word 'love.' Does *it* not stand for the greatest thing in the world? No, there is something greater even than love. It is grace. All grace no doubt has love in it. But all love does not necessarily have grace in it. Love may be nothing more than the fulfilment of the law. I love God, but God deserves love, and so my love is not grace. I ought to love my neighbour, but having said 'ought' I can lay no claim to grace. A mother's love for her child is wonderful and beautiful, but no mother would dream of calling it grace, for love, surely, is the child's right from the woman who bore him. Grace is love which is not due to us, to which we have no manner of claim, which we have in no way earned or deserved, but which the heart out of pure goodness lavishes on the unworthy. I may love and stand upright on a level with her whom I love, but grace appears when I stoop, reaching down to somewhere below me. And as there is no downward reach so immeasurable as the reach from God to man, from the Saviour to the sinner, from the height of heavenly purity to the horrible pit and the miry clay, there is nothing in life to be compared with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word 'grace,' while characteristic of New Testament thought and of all St. Paul's teaching, is specially prominent in this Epistle. What is involved in it?

1. To begin with, it involves the absolute freedom of all the dealings of God with mankind. All that He does proceeds out of this perfect freedom. It is in the strictest sense a personal act, the full effect of which lies in this feature of it. Grace has been frequently spoken of almost as if it were an appointed intermediary between God and man, a commodity which God dispenses, a quasi-magical energy which is governed by laws that follow material rather than personal analogies. This conversion of grace into an occult entity dispensed by God through ordered means and under prescribed conditions is totally foreign

to the use of the term by St. Paul, or indeed by any of the New Testament writers. Throughout this Epistle, as elsewhere, grace is above all a transcendent act and deed of God's love and of the sovereign will that gives effect to His love. As such it expresses His personal attitude towards mankind and gathers up into itself all His holy perfection.

2. Since grace represents the personal attitude and action of God, what is its nature? Most condescending favour and most generous bounty. Both are implied. So far as the former is concerned, grace is the practical expression of the Fatherly love which condescends to the weakness and frailty of man. So far as the second is concerned, the term grace implies that that Fatherly love goes forth to its objects with a wealth of benefaction that is in keeping with the infinite source from which it springs. The favour of God is no easy and ineffectual attitude towards men. It means that the fullness of Divine perfection is put at their disposal.

¶ Grace was Jowett's sovereign word. He was always probing into the depths of its meaning and discovering some new aspect of its unsearchable riches. Each discovery he heralded with satisfaction. 'You cannot define it,' he said on one occasion, 'but then you cannot define anything that is really lovely, still less can you define love itself. As soon as you begin to describe a garden you feel you have only just got the alpha of the great alphabet and all the rest is left untouched. I feel just like that when I begin to try to say anything about Grace.'

'There is no word I have wrestled so much with as Grace. It is just like expressing a great American forest by a word. No phrase can express the meaning of Grace. If anyone is in love you do not take down a dictionary to find out its meaning. But how much further can you get in dealing with these primary exercises—these primary elements in the life of the soul? You cannot diagnose. But there is nothing negative about it, nothing merely passive. When we speak about the Grace of God there are so many who think of Grace as favour, conciliatoriness and kindly sentiment. I want to say there is nothing in God that is aloof, nothing of mere composure, nothing of passive regard, nothing apathetic. Every attribute of God is a fountain of vitality and the throne from which flows the river of the Water of Life. Grace is favour, but it means more than this. It is holy love radiating from the soul of the Eternal into the soul of His children and radiating holy love into His children, transforming them to His likeness and equipping them for His service.[1]

3. Hence effective help is of the very essence of grace. While the doctrine of grace rebukes the self-sufficiency of man, it conveys to his heart that God will save to the uttermost, alike of degree and of duration, those who put their trust in Him. Hence the Epistle to the Ephesians connects the grace of God in the closest way with His power exerted in our behalf.

And so, in the midst of his great description of the quickening together with Christ of those who had been dead in trespasses and in sins, and of how they have been raised to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus—the whole of which is an outstanding mark of God's power—the Apostle interpolates the declaration 'by grace have ye been saved.' He goes on to say that the object of this display of saving power is that 'in the ages to come He might show *the exceeding riches of his grace* in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.'

4. But this Fatherly condescension and bounty, this effective help, is displayed towards sinful men. Hence grace is most closely connected with mercy. Indeed, the two are almost interchangeable. For example, in the very passage just quoted, which attributes 'salvation' to grace, the Apostle says that 'God, being rich *in mercy*, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ' (ii. 4, 5). The love of God is

[1] A. Porritt, *J. H. Jowett*, 217.

manifested in grace, and the operation of grace in regard to a sinful world can only be in mercy. Grace, thus working through mercy, represents the effectual setting aside of sin, both in itself and in all its effects, in order that the ends of Fatherly love may be fully wrought out. The nature of grace in all its holiness, righteousness, and love is revealed in redemption. Its resources and method are displayed in the whole of the work and of the process which culminates in the reconciliation and adoption of sinful men. While its saving energy is concentrated upon each individual who receives it, its operations include the entire universe, in so far as it shares the blessings or co-operates in the work of redemption.

¶ There is a story of a little girl who said, when asked what grace was: 'Please, sir, it is getting everything for nothing.' That is very good, but grace is more than that. If the little girl had said, 'It is one who deserves everything bad, getting everything good for nothing,' it would have been nearer a definition of grace.

Grace is more than mercy; grace is more than love; grace is the largest word in the Bible. It is the greatest word, the most inclusive word, and holds in its contents more than any other word of human speech. Imagine a criminal who had robbed his best friend and now stood before his judge. If the friend whom he had injured were to plead with the judge to have mercy on him, that would be wonderful, would it not? That would be marvellous kindness. If the wronged one were to come and plead with the judge for the ingrate standing there in his guilt, that would be wonderful. But grace does more than that. And if the wronged one were to love the wretch who had wronged him, really love him, that would be even more wonderful. But grace is more than that. To get a true illustration of grace, you must have the wronged one coming to the judge and saying, 'Let the sentence fall on me; I do not ask that this righteous law shall be set at naught, and treated as a thing to be set at naught; the law is right. But let it sheathe its sword in my breast, and let him go free.' That is grace.[1]

5. Hence there is something transcendent and superabundant in grace as the Epistle describes it. Again and again the word 'riches' is applied to it or to its manifestation and experience. This term, of course, signifies inexhaustible fullness. But it seems also to carry with it the suggestion that in the manifestation of grace in Christ God surpasses His own previous record and is ever surprising men by fresh tokens of His magnificence and munificence. In adopting men as His sons and raising them into heavenly places He consummates all His previous dealings with them. He made man the summit of creation; 'Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.' Now he is raised from the summit of earthly well-being into the enjoyment and promise of the heavenly. The Divine dealings which remove sin once for all through Christ transcend the work of the law. The breaking forth of ever new experiences of light and love triumphs over the limitations of human nature, and makes even its finitude, as created, capable of infinity. The election of Israel is enlarged to include the Gentiles. The triumphant power of Christ includes the universe itself. In all these respects God surpasses Himself in 'The fulness of the times.' The sense of riches in personal character and conduct comes home to us whenever we see excellence surpassed. In the experience of God's grace the Apostle, brought up in the great traditions of Old Testament faith, finds them all transcended in Christ. Hence the Epistle at every stage of its description suggests, not only a positive glory, but a 'glory that excelleth.' All the excellences of God's previous dealings with mankind have been gloriously surpassed in Christ, both in actual achievement and in infinity of promise.[2]

[1] C. I. Scofield, *In Many Pulpits*, 87.
[2] R. Sangster Anderson.

Saved by Grace.

Eph. ii. 8.—'By grace are ye saved.'

1. Grace is a word which runs all through the New Testament, and yet is singularly alien to our ordinary natural speech. We hear the Benediction, 'The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.' What exactly do we understand by grace, the grace of the Lord Jesus? Think how the whole New Testament may be summed up in its own language as the Word of His grace; the Gospel of the grace of God; the exceeding riches of His grace; the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved; My grace is sufficient for you. What is this grace?

(1) There seems always to have been, even before St. Paul's time, some antithesis between grace and law. Men said about the preaching of Jesus, 'There is such grace in His words.' By 'grace' they seem to have meant that His words were so different from the ordinary teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees. The Scribes and the Pharisees said, 'Do not do this, do not do that,' and 'You must keep this commandment, and must keep that commandment; and, more particularly on the Sabbath Day, you must be extremely careful about every little thing that you do or refrain from doing throughout the day.' The teaching of Jesus was very different from that, and the people expressed it by saying it was grace, by which they meant that it was the Son coming with the good news of the Father. All through His message, instead of the thunders of Sinai, there was what Matthew Arnold called 'sweet reasonableness.' It was the Father speaking through the Son, and saying to the outside world, 'My son, give me thine heart.' It was the message of the Father, without whose thought not even a sparrow could fall to the ground. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' It was the word of grace set over against the hard law of the Scribes and the Pharisees.

(2) If we are to define just what we mean by 'grace,' can we do it better than by saying that the grace of God is just the sheer goodness of God? That is what it seems to mean in the New Testament—the sheer goodness of God, who gives to all men liberally and upbraids not, who sends His sunshine and His rain upon the just and upon the unjust, who is ever more ready to hear than we are to pray; above all, the sheer goodness of the father who, when the prodigal was yet a long way off, ran to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and put the ring on his finger and the robe round his shoulders, and killed the fatted calf and said, 'Rejoice with me, for my son was lost and is found; he was dead and is alive again.' The grace of God by which, according to St. Paul, we are saved, is the sheer goodness of God; and that is of course a very central point for Christian theology—that in the first instance we are saved not by our love to God but by His love to us; not by our striving after Him but by His yearning after us; not by the closeness with which we may succeed in clinging to Him but because He cleaves to us more closely than a brother. 'Oh Love that wilt not let me go'—that is the grace of God in the New Testament.

¶ Grace is more than mercy. It is more than tender mercy. It is more than a multitude of tender mercies. Grace is more than love. It is more than innocent love. Grace is holy love, but it is holy love in spontaneous movement going out in eager quest toward the unholy and the unlovely, that by the ministry of its own sacrifice it might redeem the unholy and the unlovely into its own strength and beauty. The Grace of God is holy love on the move to thee and me, and the like of thee and me. It is God unmerited, undeserved, going out towards the children of men, that He might win them into the glory and brightness of His own likeness.[1]

2. But someone may say, 'That may be all very true about someone else's experience, but it is not real to mine.'

[1] *J. H. Jowett*, 218.

(1) One may say, 'My father and my mother love me, and my friends love me, but that does not keep me from sin; and when you say that people are called to a sense of God's great personal love and a sense of the great work there is to do in the world for God, well, that is all very well for spiritually-minded people and for the few, but, as for me, I am not spiritually minded, and cannot rise to it, I cannot do that.' Well, whoever said we could do it? Whoever said we could make ourselves saints? The question is whether we believe that God can do it; whether we believe, when we feel ourselves to be so unspiritual and so dry, that God is able, as the New Testament says, out of us to bring forth rivers of living water, to make life the most beautiful and the most joyful thing we can imagine, to give us a work to do for His sake.

(2) Another may say, I cannot rise to this life because of what is behind me. It is all very well for other people, but for me this life of being holy and having the love of God spread abroad in my heart, and dying to self and living for other people—it is not possible because of what is behind. What is the attitude of God towards such people? The Church has always said, Look at Christ. Look at Him upon the Cross, praying, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'; look at Him saying, 'I say not unto thee, Until seven times: But Until seventy times seven'; look at Christ weeping over Jerusalem and saying, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not!'; look at Him saying, 'I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.'

Indeed, it has been the experience of the Church that only as we realize that we are sinners is it possible for us to understand this grace of God, to understand the very heart of the message that Christ died for sinners, that while we were yet sinners, and long before we ever thought of Him, He thought of us and sent Christ into the world to bear the sin of the world. By grace, by the sheer goodness of God, we are saved.

Had I the grace to win the grace
  Of some old man in lore complete,
My face would worship at his face,
  And I sit lowly at his feet.

Had I the grace to win the grace
  Of childhood, loving, shy, apart,
The child should find a nearer place,
  And teach me resting on my heart.

Had I the grace to win the grace
  Of maiden living all above,
My soul would trample down the base,
  That she might have a man to love.

A grace I had no grace to win
  Knocks now at my half open door:
Ah, Lord of glory, come thou in!
  Thy grace divine is all, and more.[1]

The Transfiguration of the Flesh.

Eph. ii. 8-10.—'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.'

Transfiguration! That is our key-word. Humanity in the Risen Christ is transfigured, and in that final transfiguration discovers the secret of all its normal growth from first to last. That is what we hold. And we mean that man's advance and consummation come to him by virtue of his receptivity. He is *capax Deitatis*. His nature is prophetic; it is capable of becoming the instrument of a higher Power than it can itself account for. It is never complete or intelligible by itself. It waits for a force, beyond its own, to enter it, to possess it, to expand it.

By the arrival within it of this force it discovers itself. It arrives at its true capacities. It puts out natural qualities in their full significance. We should never have known what it could be or do, if it had not been kindled into novel activities by this invasion.

Does this sound unnatural, forced, mysterious? Yet it is simply the assertion on the

[1] George Macdonald.

spiritual level of what we all of us watch happening on the physical plane.

1. The great and typical example of what we mean by transfiguration is given us in the expansion brought into the flesh by the introduction within it of the human soul. The flesh of the man is wholly identical with the flesh of the animal. It is the product of the same process. It is governed by the same conditions. In structure, in method, in material, in design, in quality, in use, there is absolute identity. Yet who could have believed what strange wonders lay hidden in the delicate texture as it contented itself with satisfying the monotonous round of limited needs which was all that the animal for such endless centuries asked of it?

Look at the grey matter tucked into the hollow of the skull! It serves the wants of the wolf or the bear as they nourish their blind thought within the brain. Through its mechanism they dig dens, they pounce on their prey, they creep through the narrow paths laid down for them to a nameless end. Well! fling into the same grey matter the soul of a man; and see what happens. That material which had slumbered in the keeping of dog or bear wakes up to a life undreamed of. It lays itself out to meet the novel strain made upon it. It develops unsuspected qualifications; it rises to every demand; it reveals infinite resources. It surrenders itself to all the subtleties of thought; it undertakes to report the finest delicacies of expression; it vibrates with all the electric play of emotion; it answers to every rapid reaction of the different nerves. How amazing the transfiguration! That which had lent itself to satisfying the dumb monotonies of the horse has become adequate to the passionate calls of a Shakespeare and to the far-reaching calculations of Newton or Darwin.

And it has done this, not by changing its nature, not by becoming other than it was, but by opening out its own normal and natural qualities. It is more entirely itself than it ever was. The higher presence in it brings out the gifts and capacities of the lower. The physical qualities of the flesh would never have shown their real efficiency if the pressure of the rational soul had not been applied, to evoke and inspire them.

Take the case of eye or ear. There they are, ready to become what we make them. We take them over from the animal world in which they had served their limited service, and we pour through the one the vast storm of a Beethoven symphony; we placard before the other the subtle splendour of Turner's visions; and lo! each is ready. Each fulfils its astounding ministry. Each is adequate to the new and unprecedented task. It is the flesh itself that discovers how wonderful it can be in its own physical way, through the illumination shot through it by a force which is not its own. It is the flesh which, while remaining wholly and utterly what it is, is lifted on to a new range of possibility and displays a capacity to live at the level of that which is higher than itself.

2. Cannot we carry out that experience, and draw from it the interpretation of what the Incarnation has done for man? It is, to begin with, man's natural consummation, for it fulfils and crowns all that his nature suggests or needs. It is in that sense the outcome of what he is, the fulfilment of his story; but then, let us note carefully what that story has revealed to us about this fulfilment for which we look. The story of man is the story, as it unrolls itself, of a cry for some fulfilment which he cannot of himself achieve. It is prophetic. It holds in it the promise, the potency of what it has not the power to become; for indeed its own essential verity lies not within its own borders, but in its capacity to receive into itself this arriving power. Human nature is so made that it may become the vehicle and the vessel of this Divine indwelling by which its own qualities will be raised to a higher power and will attain their fuller realization. It is this Divine indwelling that can alone assure to it that for which it craves. Therefore it is in Christ the deed is done, for which all humanity is waiting, toward which it all points, for which it is prepared, and in which it is completed.

Lo! the new man is born, the man (that is) who has been lifted to the full height of his manhood by virtue of the immanent Deity. The witness to that immanence is to be seen in the enlargement of his manhood. Christ is more truly human than we are, more utterly human than we can ever succeed in being. He carries our humanity to a further point. He realizes a humanity which we cannot attain to. He is the Man whom we have striven to be, the Man that we have failed to be, the Man that we have not the strength, or the concentration, or the courage, or the faith to fulfil. He is what man ought to be, what he was meant to be, what he is in the light of eternity; and He completes what we have maimed; He redeems what we have spoiled; and He renews what we have wasted. He does more. He does not stop short. He goes on where we are arrested. He enheartens our poor flesh and enriches it, and endows it, and expands it, and fertilizes it, and illuminates it until new capacities stir, and wake, and work; and the body which He has taken of ours is shot through with strange virtues that issue in healing and in restoration; and powers of pardon pass out through the touch of His Hand, and the sound of His Voice, and the breadth of His prayer; and His whole Being in its natural humanity is now transcendently alive. It moves in a new atmosphere; it lives on a new plane; it is one with all the deep verities that underlie creation, and it acts in union with the sum of things. It is at peace there with the whole of nature, and it is utterly natural.

Natural, yes, and how are we to express what has happened to it? What word is there which can better describe what we want to say than the old repellent, much abused term, supernatural?

Supernatural; not unnatural; not at variance with nature, not suspending natural law; no such silly absurdities; but nature surpassing itself; nature transcending itself; nature carried beyond itself; nature so used as to become in itself the instrument of that which of itself it could not be; nature possessed by an immanent soul from out of a higher world which propels it forward over its own limits until it has discovered in itself the power to become a new creature; nature illuminated, nature transfigured, humanity reborn—that is the supernatural as it is in Christ Jesus.

3. And this humanity of His, so stainless and so strong, so clear and so free—this humanity of His which is His alone, as the One who has revealed man to himself and realized him in his completed integrity—this humanity so unique, incomparable, supreme and transcendent—He offers it to us, to become ours, immanent in us. 'Take, eat: this is my body.'

It passes down into us. That which is transcendent in Him becomes immanent in us. It takes possession. It works upon us. It recreates. We become remade from within. We become His workmanship, created anew of Jesus Christ. Not of ourselves. It is the gift of God. By grace it is done, through faith.

And so taking of His, taken into Him, we learn the strange secret of that new life as we surrender ourselves passively to the strong invasion—only to become more actively alive than we could ever have conceived possible. Think of the clay in the hand of the potter! So utterly passive, surrendered, dead; yet, under the power of the whirring wheel, it passes into every delicate shape of curving rim and dimpled edge. It becomes like a living thing in its swift changes, as it passes under our eyes into ever new imaginings. These shapes into which it flows are not of the clay. These arrive from elsewhere—out of the mind of the potter. Yet only in and through clay could they take that particular form. Their entire art is to show what clay can be and do.

Yet—no dead clay! For this masterful will does not work from without by whirring wheel and biting tool. This workmanship of the Spirit passes into the material through which it works. The material itself becomes possessed of the craft. The passion of the Worker is ensouled in the work. His Purpose, His Imagination, His Desire—all reproduce themselves within it. So you—God's work-

manship—are yourselves the workers according to law, 'that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' You do it all. You work out your salvation; just because it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do His good pleasure. You put out your force into it. You think, imagine, wish, will, whatever is to be done. Nothing can be done without you. Your own faith makes you whole. Your own faith removes the mountains. You can do all that you desire to do through Christ in you. That strengtheneth you.[1]

God's Poems.

Eph. ii. 10.—'We are his workmanship.'

In the Old and New Testaments there are twenty-six Hebrew and Greek words used for work, act, a thing done, performance, workmanship. And some of these are repeated many times. The word used here occurs only in this passage. The usual Greek word for workmanship is *ergon* or *pragma*—but here we have *poiēma*. That is to say, Christian men and women are God's poems.

There was in the Apostle's mind, as he wrote the sentence, a picture of the men and women for whom his letter was intended. They had undergone 'a sea-change into something rich and strange.' Once they had been dead in trespasses and sins; now their hearts throbbed and tingled with spiritual life. Once they were children of wrath; now they were heirs and possessors of grace, and mercy, and peace. Once their powers were debased, their sensibilities were poisoned, their truest nature was stifled beneath a load of evil thoughts and habits; now they were fellow-citizens with the saints, and were rising every hour into completer holiness and more Christ-like love. It was a wonderful and happy revolution. It was a transfiguration.

¶ Suppose that on a Sabbath day we were carried away from our accustomed surroundings, and were set down in the midst of a native Christian congregation on a Samoan island, or in a vast Indian city, or by the side of an African lake. We saw the worshippers, so reverent, so earnest, with their faces glowing with a new light and gladness. And we remembered that, only a year or two ago, in some cases but a few months back, they were enslaved by the ignorance and the vice of heathenism. I am certain that then we would share Paul's thankfulness and joy. Looking at those people, and pondering the marvel and the magnificence of the thing that had befallen them, we would be compelled to say—not merely 'They are God's workmanship,' but 'They are God's poem.'[1]

God's poem: there is a haunting music in the metaphor, a wealth of suggestiveness, a fragrance as of a garden in summer. Let us study its message.

1. First a poem is a *miracle*. The very etymology of the word teaches us this. A poem, literally interpreted, is something created and creative. It has risen into being almost as astoundingly as the world did, when the thought and voice and touch of God summoned it from nothingness. It is itself almost as amazing and as noble. Our old Scottish name for the poet was the Maker, the Creator. If we take up Scott's *The Fair Maid of Perth* we find there how the friend of the smith, speaking to him about his own description of the beautiful surroundings of that ancient city, exclaims: 'Aha, so thou canst play the maker yet?' and Scott explains in a footnote that the old Scottish word for 'poet' is simply the work 'maker,' and indeed the literal translation of the original Greek *poiētes*.

The poet is indeed a Maker. He makes. He quickens. Into our minds and hearts he calls ideas and ideals, visions and truths, hopes and resolutions, which were not there formerly. He catches the first streaks of the dawn on the eastern hill-tops. He feels before other men the tremor and the impulse of splendid convictions. He opens our dull eyes to loveliness and inspirations of which we were

[1] H. S. Holland, *Facts of the Faith*, 1ff.

[1] A. Smellie, *Sunset Glory*, 87.

quite unconscious. Even when his theme is a common one how he invests it with significance, with freshness, with a universe of meaning! There is in him that inexplicable endowment which we designate genius, an endowment superhuman and godlike.

And 'we are God's poem'—every one of us who belongs to His household of salvation and faith. About us there is the miraculous element. On us there is the stamp of a Divine creation. One birth makes us citizens of the world in which we spend our daily history—a birth which, though God stands behind it, is governed by natural laws and is conformed to an everywhere-prevailing type. But another birth introduces us to the kingdom of grace. Heredity and parenthood have nothing to do with it. Directly, unmistakably, it is brought about by the intervention and the almightiness of God. His Spirit, who moved on the face of the waters in the far-off beginnings of things, moves as mysteriously and as victoriously in our separate souls; and one by one He lifts us, He and none else, out of death into eternal life. 'You hath he quickened,' says Paul in this chapter.

Here and there in literature we meet a man who is pre-eminently a Maker, a poet—a Chaucer, a Shakespeare, a Milton, a Wordsworth. But nowhere, in our race of enfeebled and self-destroyed sinners, is there a man who is a Maker, a creator, a poet: the parallel is not exact and perfect. It is God's prerogative alone to conceive and write the best poems, the poems of lives redeemed and renewed, saved from wrath and from disobedience and fashioned after the image of Christ.

¶ In one of his letters, Dr. John Brown tells us of a visit he paid to an exhibition of Sir Henry Raeburn's portraits. They are 'quite wonderful,' he says, 'for honest, living, delightful work, manly and womanly, all of them, and all in their best moods.' But he goes on: 'But there is a want; I don't know what to call it, but it is what Sir Joshua and Gainsborough have—an ethereal something.' Sir Henry, he thinks, can give us the thing seen, but not the unseen and the imagined, which is yet the true: painters, like poets, have their degrees, and not all of them are creators of the supreme sort. Ah! and it is God alone in the spiritual realm who can call forth in you and me the 'ethereal something.' Without Him we may have many good qualities; but we are dead.[1]

2. Next, a poem is a *thing of beauty*. The thought which it contains is couched in memorable, rhythmical, exquisite language—language that commends and adorns the thought, and that gives it an abiding place in the sanctuary of the soul. There have been poets who have despised these graces and harmonies of expression; but, much as we reverence them for the truths they have unveiled to our gaze, our gratitude would have been greater still if they had draped the truths in a winsomer dress. This is one main distinction—is it not?—between prose and poetry, that in prose the substance and the content of the message are the essential matters, but in poetry, while the substance remains of infinite importance, the clothing too ought always to be comely and artistic and perfect. And when it is so, does it not carry us into a sweeter and warmer air than the weightiest prose can do?

And 'we are God's poem,' declares St. Paul. It is as if he said: Not only are we the manifestation of God's creative thought and energy, but we are expected to reveal Him rhythmically, sweetly, alluringly, persuasively. The form of our Christianity signifies as well as the substance.

Alas, some of us, whom He has raised from the dead, into newness of life, are forgetting this. We may be His poems; but what jars, what roughnesses, what defects and discords, interfere with our music! We tolerate tempers and practices which ought to be forsaken and crucified. We do not aspire after the loftiest interpretation of the faith and behaviour of believing men. We lack a sterling righteousness, or an unwearying love, or a conquering joy. God's miracle has been wrought for us, but we are not publishing it poetically, with attraction and with eloquence

[1] A. Smellie, *Sunset Glory*, 91.

and with charm. He has created us, but we are unmindful that He has created us, as our Apostle puts it, 'unto good works'—works as melodious as the happy murmur of the brook, or the rustle of the leaves when the wind is soft and low, or the cadence of a song.

Perhaps what we need is to lay aside something that is unworthy of our high and heavenly calling. There is a sin to which our heart has not yet bidden good-bye. There is a grudge that we are cherishing against our brother. There is an inconsistency that weakens our testimony for God, that prevents some who know us from submitting themselves to Him. These spoil the poetry; and it never will ring and soar and triumph as it should until we have abjured them. Or perhaps what we need is to receive more continuously and simply the Holy Spirit of God. If we reposed unquestioningly on Him, He would keep our being the shrine of what is lovely and of good report; He would teach our lips to speak the language at once of truth and of tenderness; and He would rid our virtue of those deficiencies and harshnesses which mar woefully our witness for Christ. He would do it all in His own silent and yet victorious way. If we trust Him absolutely and always, God's poem will become as glorious in its form as it is Divine in its substance.

3. Once again, a poem is the *utterance of a man's deepest and realest self*. A great poem provokes our thought and enlarges our horizon, it sings itself into our soul and stays with us for ever. We read it for the first time, and we have the curious feeling that we have known it always. It so agrees with all that is best and purest in us, it unfolds so accurately our 'instincts immature' and our unspoken longings and the beliefs we felt, but could not explain, that we say, 'The poet is disclosing and expounding my very soul.' Plato, the wise Greek, held that this world in which we move, and we ourselves who move through it, are only shadows of another universe, which is ideal and perfect. Here things and men are broken; but there everything is complete. Here they are tarnished; but there they are all fair, and there is no spot in them. That universe, he said, is our native and proper home; and he taught, too, that, when the prophets and the poets behold the realities of this nobler world and delineate them to us, there is that in us which recognizes their truth and beauty, and which embraces them with willingness and delight. It is what our own singer tells us:

> In a season of calm weather,
> Though inland far we be,
> Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither,
> Can in a moment travel thither,
> And see the children sport upon the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Now Paul has a similar assurance for us. 'We are God's poem,' he writes; 'and in us, as we are saved by Christ and remade by the Holy Spirit, He is at length declaring what He always designed us to be—He is bringing us back to those good works which He ordained before that we should walk in them. Now, at last, we begin to realize His original portrait of us. Now, at last, we begin to be our own selves, and to dwell in our rightful world, and to speak our native tongue.'

Have we considered it in this light: that, from the first, it was God's purpose that we should be His poems; that long ago, in His eternal plans, He had prepared our fitting sphere and our true life-story; that our sin was the disturbance and destruction of His primal scheme; and that, when He makes us partakers in His redemption, we are being restored to ourselves? It follows that there is not one of us who is possessor of a full and satisfying manhood or womanhood, until God in Christ is ours and we are His. We may have massive natural capabilities and winning natural qualities. But something is absent; and that something is central, indispensable, vital. We find ourselves, we proclaim ourselves, we fulfil ourselves, only when God ends our banishment and leads us home.

Even then we do not immediately regain all that we had forfeited. Slowly and gradually the process of our sanctification goes on.

Slowly and gradually, but surely too, we come to ourselves, and to the walk and work which our Lord mapped out for us from the foundation of the world, and to the rhythm and melody and music which should have been ours without a break, but which foolishly and fatally we jangled and confused and threw out of tune. It takes all the teaching of His Word, and all the patient education of His Spirit, and all the purging and ripening discipline of His Providence, to fashion us anew into that flawless poem which has been in His mind from the everlasting past.

But, one day, the process will be finished. One day, 'the machinery just meant to give our soul its bent,' will have performed its task. One day, in our Father's heaven, we shall utter our very being without difficulty and without mistake.[1]

God's Work of Art.

Eph. ii. 10.—'We are his workmanship.'

In the Epistle to the Ephesians there is a passage where the Apostle speaks of the Church which he is addressing—and he includes himself in the description—as a work of art. It was no easy expression for translators who did not realize that St. Paul was using the terms of Greek culture; and so our English version states that we are the handwork of God, or the workmanship of God. Now that may be good Semitic, but it is bad Hellenic: and the Apostle is using a stronger term than can be illustrated from purely Semitic sources. He says we are God's *poem*—such is the transliteration of the Greek word he employs. Yet even this rendering is inadequate; for to the Greek mind a poem stood for any and every work of art, and not merely for the expression of high thoughts in right and harmonious verse. So, since we have no single English word to express the Apostle's exact thought, we have to use more than one word and to say that we are 'God's work of art'—to include under that expression all that creation involves and all that redemption implies.

[1] A. Smellie.

What, then, is art? And what is a work of art? In its simplest form, art is the putting of mind into matter, it is the action of thought upon stuff, it is the production of cosmos out of chaos.

Suppose, for instance, that I obtain some lumps of clay, a handful of colours, and a hot fire. Out of these I produce, partly by my fingers, and partly by a potter's wheel, and partly by the assistance of friendly 'Brother Fire,' cups and plates in porcelain. One such porcelain vessel was sold recently for several thousands of pounds, though its original materials were worth a halfpenny. What made the difference in value? The answer is, that mind made it.

Or, suppose I give you some rags, some soot, and some gum, and the quill of a goose; you combine these together by a series of actions, in a variety of processes of mind co-operating with matter. What do these processes result in? In Dante's *Divina Comedia*, and Shakespeare's plays, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*—and in any little books that we may write on our own account.

Or let us go down into the marsh, and pluck a reed. We notice that it is a hollow reed, and we stop one end of it artificially; at the other end we cut a notch, and we blow into the tube thus formed. Do not say 'What a noise!'

> The humblest reed that trembles in the marsh,
> If Heaven select it for its instrument,
> May shed celestial music on the breeze;

and the more celestial, as the reeds are multiplied and properly placed. For what is that which results? It is the 'Moonlight Sonata,' and the 'Hallelujah Chorus,' and 'Home, sweet Home.' All that, by putting mind into matter.

When St. Paul speaks of the Church as God's work of art, he implies that the Eternal Artist is putting His beauty upon us, He is expressing His thought through us, He is making His music out of us. For we are His work of art.[1]

[1] J. Rendel Harris, *As Pants the Hart*, 126ff.

Christless, Hopeless, Godless.

Eph. ii. 12.—'Ye were without Christ . . . having no hope, and without God.'

THE chapter from which this text is taken may be said to be the *locus classicus* on the difference between an unsaved and a saved state; that is to say, it is the passage in all the Bible in which the difference between these two states is most clearly and amply stated. St. Paul is speaking to those who have made the transition from the one of these states to the other, and he tells them what they were, and what they now are. He himself has made this transition, and to him the contrast between the unsaved state, in which he once had been, and the saved state, in which he now was, always seemed like the contrast between night and day.

If we want to find out the difference between an unsaved and a saved condition, this second chapter of Ephesians is the place to go for it. And perhaps no verse of it is more impressive than the twelfth, which describes the dark side. It says: 'Remember, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.'

1. *Without Christ.*—Can any man be said to be without Christ? How can any man be said to be without Christ? The teaching of Christ has so penetrated the habits and customs of men in the modern world that, as soon as we are born and enter on the heritage of the blessings of civilization, whether we know it or not we come under the influence of Christ. He so pervades every department of modern life that we may almost be said to breathe in His influence with the common air.

It is for reasons like this that we speak of the nations as Christian nations, and every baptized person by courtesy gets the name of Christian. But there is a difference between getting the name of Christian by courtesy and having it in reality. We all know what it is to know a person by hearsay and nothing else. He may be a well-known man, and we may have heard often about him. But there are far closer relationships than that. Human beings may become one with another, so that the one can use the first personal pronoun about the other, calling him 'My.'

Now, Christ comes into such relationship with us. He is a living person, and He wishes not only to be an influence upon us, but to be personally known to us, as man is to man. He employs the very closest human relationship to describe His connection with those to whom He is united. He is in them; they are in Him. They are able to say, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' In one word, it is by love that we are made one with Christ. The human heart, among the other affections of which it is capable, is capable of an affection for Jesus Christ. Till this passion is awakened we are without Christ, but when it is awakened in the soul then we possess Christ.

Sometimes I catch sweet glimpses of His face,
But that is all.
Sometimes He looks on me and seems to smile,
But that is all.
Sometimes He speaks a passing word of peace,
But that is all.
Sometimes I think I hear His loving voice
Upon me call.

And is this all He meant when thus He spoke,—
'Come unto me?'
Is there no deeper, more enduring rest
In Him for thee,
Is there no steadier light for thee in Him?
Oh come and see!

Oh come and see! Oh look, and look again;
All shall be right;
Oh taste His love, and see that it is good,
Thou child of night:
Oh trust thou, trust thou in His grace and power,
Then all is bright!

Christ and His love shall be thy blessèd all
For evermore!
Christ and His light shall shine on all thy ways
For evermore!
Christ and His peace shall keep thy troubled soul
For evermore![1]

2. *Without Hope.*—Man is a child of hope, and without hope of some kind he cannot live. But what is meant here is the great hope of immortality. Now, in one sense it may be said that belongs to everybody. Man is immortal. Is there anything more interesting than the history of the growth of that belief? Strange to say, it is not to the people whom we are accustomed to think of as the people of revelation that we have to go for the germs of that belief. For reasons known to Himself God does not seem to have communicated this belief to the Hebrew. Apparently it was among the Egyptians that it first arose. But the instinct is native to the human mind, and once started, once set into activity, it appeared in many places. And now one may say it is the heritage of the whole world. The best teachers of mankind have all taught it; and the more divinely-souled are the individuals of the human race, the more ready are they to believe in immortality. It is a grand and a noble belief—that in immortality. Yes, but when we begin to think about it we have to go a step further, and say, 'What kind of immortality? We are immortal, but what kind of immortality is to be ours? Is it to be an immortality of weal or of woe?' When we ask that question we see how this splendid hope may become a menace and a terror. It may be no hope at all, but the very reverse of a hope.

¶ There is enough evidence available to show us that Rationalism has nothing to offer by which a human soul can the better take its departure into the unknown. On the contrary, the evidence shows that a man who casts aside Religion and takes upon him the yoke of Agnosticism adds to the weakness and fear which the experience of dying brings, and must bring, to human life.

Herbert Spencer's *Life* provides a striking illustration of this. At the age of seventy-five he wrote to a correspondent: 'My own feeling respecting the ultimate mystery is such that I cannot even try to think of infinite space without some feeling of terror so that I habitually shun the thought.'[1]

3. *Without God.*—How can any man be said to be without God? Surely every man has a God? We cannot live a day without God. Without God we cannot draw a breath. He has created us; He has been a Providence all our lives; He has given us food to eat, and raiment to put on, and all things richly to enjoy. He is never far away, but constantly near every one of us. Surely every man has a God?

God has made man for Himself, and the heart of man knows no rest till it rests in God. So said St. Augustine, in the language of genius and poetry; and what Augustine prophesies, so to speak, has in modern times been scientifically established. There is no result of the increased knowledge of the nations of the earth, and the history of the best characteristics of modern times more fixed than this, that man is a religious being; and it is allowed by the highest scientific authority that the reasonable satisfaction of the religious instinct is the greatest desideratum of human life. That is why we may all be said to have God. In every one of us there is a throne which is vacant till God comes and fills it. Ah, but here is the mystery now! Although that throne in us belongs to God, He cannot come in and occupy it without our permission. We must invite Him. God says, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.' Why does He do that? Why does not He open the door and come in? Well, He cannot. This door can be opened only from the inside. Even God cannot open it from the outside, and not until a man hears His voice, and opens the door, can God come in and occupy His own throne.

[1] H. Bonar.

[1] H. Lewis, *Modern Rationalism*, 390.

Now here is where Godlessness comes in. There are many who will not open the door. That may be due, in some cases, just to carelessness and neglect. But in other cases it is due to stronger feeling. Many are living a life which they know God disapproves of, and therefore they will not have Him into their hearts to reign over them, and so they lock the door upon God, and will not open it to let Him in.

'Friend, open to Me'.—'Who is this that calls?
Nay, I am deaf as are my walls:
Cease crying, for I will not hear
Thy cry of hope or fear.'

'Friend, My Feet bleed.
Open thy door to Me and comfort Me.'
'I will not open, trouble me no more.
Go on thy way footsore,
I will not rise and open unto thee.'
'Then is it nothing to thee? Open, see
Who stands to plead with thee.
Open, lest I should pass thee by, and thou
One day entreat my Face
And howl for grace,
And I be deaf as thou art now.
Open to Me.'

Then I cried out upon him: 'Cease,
Leave me in peace:
Fear not that I should crave
Aught thou mayst have.
Leave me in peace, yea trouble me no more,
Lest I arise and chase thee from my door.
What, shall I not be let
Alone, that thou dost vex me yet?'

But all night long that voice spake urgently,
'Open to Me.'
Still harping in mine ears:
'Rise, let Me in.'
Pleading with tears:
'Open to Me, that I may come to thee.'
While the dew dropped, while the dark hours were cold:

'My Feet bleed, see My Face,
See My Hands bleed that bring thee grace,
My Heart doth bleed for thee,—
Open to Me.'

So till the break of day:
Then died away
That voice, in silence as of sorrow;
Then footsteps echoing like a sigh
Passed me by,
Lingering footsteps slow to pass.
On the morrow
I saw upon the grass
Each footprint marked in blood, and on my door
The mark of blood for evermore.[1]

There are three practical tests by which we may know if we are Christless, Hopeless, Godless.

(1) Are we without Christ? The test is interest in the souls of men. If Christ is in us, the most characteristic feature of Christ will be reproduced in us. Now, what was the characteristic feature of Christ? It was that He was the Saviour. He lived and He died to save the world. Now, if Christ is in us, we shall have an interest in the salvation of the world.

(2) Are we without hope? The test is, With what feelings do we look forward to death? Now, we all know that we are going to die, and that soon; but with what feelings do we look forward to death? It is true there is a natural fear of death, by which even good people may be kept subject to bondage; but the more true Christians look straight at the object, the more clearly do they see that they have nothing to fear, but everything to hope, because they have a treasure on the other side of death. They have a home prepared for them in the better country.

(3) Are we without God? A man may know that he is without God if he is without prayer. Prayer is the simplest expression of the desire for God. It is by prayer we invite God to come in to occupy His throne; and when He is in, prayer is inevitable.

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

Hopelessness.

Eph. ii. 12.—'Having no hope.'

1. When a man becomes hopeless in religious life he loses the very springs of activity, and he sinks in ever-deepening degradation. The Scriptures employ a very powerful figure to express the state of those in whose life there is no hope. 'They that sit in darkness.' It is a graphic picture. Try to realize it. You sit by the fireside on a winter's night, with a bright fire making the room genial and cheery. You sit on until the fire burns low and eventually dies out, and the warmth gives place to a searching chill. Then the light goes out and darkness is added to the coldness. You sit on. 'They that sit in darkness.' And there are people whose soul-life is just like that. There is no fire in the grate and their light is gone out, and they abide in cold and dreary desolation, 'having no hope.' Now, what are some of the causes of this dingy and paralysing hopelessness?

(1) *The tyranny of sin.*—When sin enters into a life and is welcomed there and entertained in daily hospitality, certain consequences assuredly happen. One of the first things to happen is this: sin puts out the light of joy. There is not a man or a woman in God's wide world, who persists in deliberate sin, in whose life we could find the light of joy. There is disquiet and unrest, and a sense of a great and hungry uncertainty, and these are incompatible with the abiding presence of joy. That light is turned out. But sin goes farther, and proceeds to quench the heat of endeavour. When sin ceases to be a visitor and becomes a tenant in the home of my soul, it assumes the position of master of the house, and I become its servile attendant. Repeated experiences of the power of sin create within me a sense of impotence, and I feel how impossible it is to regain my lost sovereignty. My endeavours become more and more lukewarm, my spiritual strivings more and more spasmodic and cold. But sin goes still farther, and eventually scatters and tramples out the very fire of desire. In the earlier stages a man may feel the uselessness of endeavour while still he may eagerly wish to regain his lost estate, but in the latter stages his very wishes are destroyed and he sinks into the 'ill of all ills, the lack of desire.' The light of joy has been turned out! The heat of endeavour has been quenched! The fire of desire has died away! And the man is reduced to a state of cheerless and wintry desolation, 'Having no hope.'

Who knocks so loud?—'A little lonely sin'.—
'Slip through,' we answer, and all Hell is in.[1]

(2) *The tempest of sorrow.*—It is when the waters of sorrow get down among the fires of life—the driving passions, the loves and the joys and the hopes—that dire ruin is wrought. It is unfortunately not an infrequent occurrence that the sorrow of a life is permitted to approach the central fires, and the light and warmth and cheer of the life are put out.

¶ I have many times heard sorrowing people say, 'I feel as cold as stone.' May we not say that the engine fire is temporarily out, and that they are drifting in hopeless bewilderment? I saw an account, a little while ago, of one of our steamships which had passed through tremendous seas, and the waters had got down into her engine-room and put out the fires. When I read the record I immediately thought of a kindred experience in the spirit, which I find expressed in the ancient words of the Psalmist: 'All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me.' The passage through heavy seas of sorrow may be attended with complete security, or it may be accompanied by unspeakable loss.

(3) *The monotony of labour.*—All monotony is tedious and depressing. To be compelled to listen to one persistent note of the organ would be an intolerable affliction, and would weigh the life down in heavy depression. To be obliged to listen even to a monotonous

[1] F. Langbridge, *Little Tapers*, 27.

speaker tends to drain away the springs of inspiration. It is the unchanging note that makes the life sink in weariness. And this perhaps is pre-eminently so when one's daily toil is one of unrelieved monotony. There are people whose work calls for no intelligence, no ingenuity, no skill. It makes not the slightest demand upon their thought. It is a purely mechanical service, and works as unsentimentally and as rigidly as a machine. The life looks out every day and sees nothing new. The morning finds it at the old routine. There is no expectancy in the day, no surprise by the road. The hammer of daily experience hits the same place at every moment, until life settles down into a benumbment which has no vision and no hope. The spring goes out of the spirit, and frequently it happens, as it did in other days, that 'Because they have no changes they fear not God.'

2. So far we have not brought in Christ, and just because He has been so deliberately left out, the hopelessness of men has been unrelieved. Let us now bring Him into the dark cold life, and see what happens. 'But now in Christ Jesus'—what? What kind of hope does the Master kindle when He enters into communion with a human life? He kindles and keeps aflame a three-fold hope; hope in the perfectibility of self, hope in the instrumentality of all things, and hope in personal immortality.

(1) *Hope in the perfectibility of self.*—Christ comes to me, a poor sensitive, devil-governed man, and whispers to me that I too can attain to freedom and put on the strength of the ideal man. I stand amazed before the suggestion. Quietly He reassures me and tells me that I too can be perfected. I have seen what men can do. I have seen my fellows take a mere refuse place in the city, one of its eyesores, and turn it into a place of beauty. Yes, I have seen the place of refuse transformed into a garden. And even now I hear my fellows speaking confidently of the re-afforesting of the Black Country, and of turning the place of slag and cinder heaps, of blackness and death, into a place of sweet growth and pleasantness and beauty. But my Master tells me that the same miracle can be wrought in the realm of the spirit, that the black country in the soul can be re-afforested, that that place of indiscriminate refuse can be turned into the place where the Lord would delight to dwell. 'The wilderness shall become a garden, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.' I, too, can be perfected! This is the hope He kindles, 'the hope of glory,' 'the hope of salvation.' The Master begins by breaking the tyranny that holds me captive.

> He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
> He sets the prisoner free.

And when I have experienced even a little of His emancipating ministry my soul walks in a wonderful hope.

(2) *Hope in the instrumentality of all things.*—If Christ purposes my perfection, then all my circumstances will be made to conspire to the accomplishment of His will. Nothing that comes to me will make me despair. I am hopeful that He will convert everything into a helpmeet and friend. 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' Even sorrow? Yes, sorrow. Sorrow is one of the 'all things,' and is subjected to the Master's will, and is one of His instruments for the attainment of His ends. Sorrow can accomplish what comfort would always fail to do.

¶ There is a legend that tells of a German baron who, at his castle on the Rhine, stretched wires from tower to tower, that the winds might convert it into an Æolian harp. And the soft breezes played about the castle, but no music was born. But one night there arose a great tempest, and hill and castle were smitten by the fury of mighty winds. The baron went to the threshold to look out upon the terror of the storm, and the Æolian harp was filling the air with strains that rang out even above the clamour of the tempest. It needed the tempest to bring out the music! And have we not known men whose lives have not given out any entrancing music in the day of a calm prosperity, but who, when the tempest drove against them, have astonished

their fellows by the power and strength of their music? In Christ I have a hope that everything is made to work for my good.

And surely this applies to my work, too, however monotonous it may be. With the assurance that my Lord will use it for my spiritual profit, into my labour I shall put a song, and the way of drudgery will become the very highway of my Lord. Everything will give me a lift if I am in close communion with my Lord.

(3) *Hope in personal immortality.*—'Because I live, ye shall live also.' 'He hath begotten us again unto a living hope.' 'He that believeth on me shall never die.' What a hope Christ kindles! Such a hope gives to life an amazing expectancy. When Samuel Rutherford was near his end, he was so gloriously excited at the prospect that those about him had to counsel him to moderate his ecstasy! The fine flavour of that glorious expectancy should pervade all our days. That we are to live for ever with the Lord is a prospect that should fill our life with quiet and fruitful amazement. To have that life in front of us will enable us to set all things in true perspective, and to observe their true proportions. Set 'money' in the line and light of immortality, and we at once observe the limits of its ministry and range. Set 'rectitude' in the same radiant line, and we see how it clothes itself with abounding glory. Everything must be placed in that long and glorious line or nothing will be truly seen.[1]

Without God.

Eph. ii. 12.—'Without God in the world.'

1. One of the earliest, and, to our way of thinking, one of the strangest, objections ever brought against Christianity was that it was a religion without a God. The technical charge upon which several martyrs were put to death was that of Atheism. A great satirist in the middle of the second century treats Christians and Atheists as synonymous terms, and when the Emperor Constantine was received into the Christian Church he was said to have embraced an atheistical opinion.

But when we come to think of it, it is not so difficult to account for this charge. The popular religions of the then Roman world were not only religions in which there were gods many and lords many, they were also religions in which the gods, though endowed with many varied characteristics, were nothing more or less than exaggerated or deified men. They were regarded as possessing more than human power and sometimes more than human wisdom; but the great Roman Pantheon only exhibited upon a vaster scale the ideal virtues, and too often also the actual vices, of contemporary society. They loved and hated; they enjoyed feasting and dancing; they made merry and were sad. They were men and women through and through. They were displayed in human form, and the idea of perfect manhood and perfect womanhood was not a mere symbol of the Divine, but a near approach to the Divine Reality itself.

But the God whom the Christians preached had no statue! 'He that made the world and all things therein dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he wanted anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things.' There was no visible temple, no visible sacrifice. There seemed to be no link by which to connect Him with humanity. He in whom the Christian lived and moved—'breath of His breath, thought of His thought, soul of His soul'—was scarcely conceivable to the average believer in many gods, whose deities were definite, almost tangible, realities. A God who was everywhere seemed to be nowhere, and they who worshipped Him were condemned as Atheists—'without God in the world.'

This taunting accusation Paul takes up and flings back, with interest, upon those who had used it. You Gentiles, he says, were Atheists; you who were dead in sin, you who were without Christ, were also without God. And this retort was not only telling, but true. St. Paul

[1] J. H. Jowett, *The Silver Lining*, 123ff.

tells us in his Epistle to the Romans that they fell into the most horrible sins—sins too dreadful and shameful to be spoken of, and that their everyday life, even when they did not run into such fearful evils, was profligate, fierce, and miserable. And this state of moral corruption, this rotten-hearted society, was without excuse to a great extent—their understanding, he says, was darkened. They had not always been in the dark about God, but they were darkened. They grew more and more dark about Him as time went on, till at last they had lost all idea of what God was like.

So far the words have an historical, but not a personal, interest for us.

2. But from another point of view they come home to almost every one of us. 'Without God in the world.' What a description, and how, alas! it applies to individuals without number. There are persons who even come to church, and yet who are, as much as ever these Gentiles were, without God. Their religion has degenerated into religionism. Their religion is so mean a thing, and the part which God plays in it so insignificant, that it might be omitted almost altogether. Their religion is a religion of the commonplace, of the matter-of-fact respectability which is the ideal life of many.

Now the man who disregards God and God's laws is a foolish man. Why?

(1) Because God is a *Law-Giver*. This we recognize at once in the realm of Nature. We all understand quite well that natural laws do operate, and no man can say, 'I will act as though natural laws do not operate.' But it is when we get to the natural laws that come closest to us that we begin to grow a little careless. We cannot violate the law of gravitation —Oh! no—but we can violate the laws of health, and that will not hurt much. How foolish and blind we are. The laws of God are immutable, unchanging, eternal—no man can disregard them. Has not science taught us as much as that? And yet, the world is full of men 'without God'; men who disregard the moral laws. The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.' But are there not greater fools than he? There are those who say, 'There is a God, but I am going to live as though there were not any'—and there are thousands of them, tens of thousands of them.

(2) But God is more than a Law-giver—He is the *Life-Giver*, and when we try to live without God in the world, we are trying to live without the source and reservoir of life. What is Life? No man knows what life is. Science cannot answer that question for us. We have followed life back to its source, back to the original germ, the very beginning, but there we are stopped. Where does this stream, this tiny rivulet, come from, which, growing and growing, ever larger and larger, makes this vast stream of wondrous life, with all its endless variety? It is God. God is Life, and all phenomena are but the manifestations and the revelations of the Divine life that lives and moves in every living thing. All that we have and all that we are is of God. There is just so much God in us as there is life in us. Our intellect, our affections, our higher feelings, they are each and all of God. And if we come up to this point, and stop and say, 'I will have no more of God,' we are saying, 'I will have no more of life.'

(3) God the Law-giver and the Life-giver is also the *Love-giver;* not like the Hindu Brahma, absorbed, silent, abstracted. He is for ever pouring Himself forth for the sake of others. Modern science was the first to open our eyes to the fact that we live in a law-governed Universe. We heard and trembled. There arose before us the vision of a dead and heartless abstraction, taking the place of a Heavenly Father, whose mercies are over all His works—and henceforth man was to be an orphan in a bereaved Universe. But, as we looked a little deeper into the heart of things, we discovered that God was in the laws, the very meaning and essence and beating heart of love itself. Writes Browning: 'All's law, yet all's love.' In harmony with Browning, so sings Tennyson:

> one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.

The whole Universe is full of the Fatherhood of God. The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world's joy. The lonely pine upon the mountain-top waves its sombre boughs and cries: 'Thou art my sun,' and the little meadow violet lifts its cup of blue and whispers with its fragrant breath: 'Thou art my sun'; and the golden grain in a thousand fields rustles in the wind and makes answer: 'Thou art my sun.' So God sits, effulgent in the Heavens, not for a favoured few, but for the whole Universe of Life, and there is no creature so poor or low that he may not look up with childlike confidence and say: 'My Father, Thou art mine.'

(4) To live as though there were no Law-giver, no Love-giver is also to live as though there were no *Hope-giver.* And we shall never keep alive our hopes and ideals, never! unless we keep alive our Faith in God. Without God in the world! If it had been without friends, without shelter, without food in the world, that would have sounded gloomy enough, but to be without God, without the knowledge of God, without the sense of God, the faith of God, the assurance of God, is to be without hope; while on the other hand, to be with Him is to be sure of hope, sure of the future.

Without God in the world, life is not worth living, with God, life is infinitely worth living and death is infinitely more worth dying—for to live is to have faith in the Father of Jesus, and to die is to be with Him for evermore: 'Death is the veil which they who live call life; we sleep and it is lifted.'[1]

The Difference Christ Has Made.

Eph. ii. 12, 13.—'Without Christ . . . in Christ Jesus.'

In this passage Paul is speaking of the difference Christ has made to the Gentiles who believed on Him. What has He done for them?

1. He has brought *God.*—Formerly they were 'without God.' These very Ephesians, as we read in the Book of Acts, were worshippers of the great goddess Diana, and of the statue which they imagined to have fallen from heaven: that is, they were blind idolaters, and bowed down to gods that were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Nor was this the case with the people of Ephesus alone. The Jews, indeed, had been favoured from the earliest times with a knowledge of the one true God: and through their teaching, in almost every great city there was a congregation, larger or smaller, of devout men, or proselytes, as they were called, who had left the idols of their fathers, and worshipped the great Jehovah. But with these exceptions the whole earth was lying dead in darkness and in wickedness. Even the city of Athens, which among the heathens passed for the light of the world, was wholly given up to idolatry. The account which we read in the Epistle to the Romans applied, under one form or other, to all the Gentiles: 'they had changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and even to creeping things.' Their souls were bound to the footstool of any dumb idol that chance had set up among them.

2. He has brought *Hope.* Formerly they they had 'no hope.' One of the most marked of the earlier fruits which Christianity bore to the world was the bound that it set to the age of suicide. The age of the first Cæsars was emphatically the age of suicide. Tacitus tells us of a man who killed himself simply in indignation that he had been born!

It was a time when a favourite topic of discussion was the easiest means of escaping into the valley of the shadow of death, whatever that might be, as better in any case for a man than such a world as this. To this passion for suicide Christianity set a bound. It showed at once, within the wide circle of its converts, its victorious power. There was evidently ample power there, the power of faith and hope, to master it. And the glow of the hope which Christianity had kindled spread far beyond its pale, and infected with

[1] H. Mayne Young.

a loftier and more trustful spirit the tone of heathen thinking and living in the great world around. It was not very perceptible at first; but no careful student of the history of those times can fail to note a certain set of the current of heathen thought and aspiration, in the direction in which Christianity was destined to guide mankind.

Christianity at once made life an inestimably precious endowment, branding suicide as a shameful treason, as well as a wanton waste; while, on the other hand, it called forth martyrs by myriads, men not only ready but eager to pour out life like water, if they might bear witness to that which alone made it worth while to live. This new sense of the sacredness of life arose from the idea which Christianity implanted—that life was a trust from the Highest, to be used bravely, nobly, at His commandment, and at His commandment at any moment to be bravely, joyfully laid down.

3. He has brought *Liberty*. The Apostle calls it 'access': it is freedom of approach, assurance of welcome; it is the spirit of sonship, the liberty that belongs to the children of God.

Being brought into unity with the Son of God, we have direct 'access unto the Father.' Through Him, by one Spirit, all nations of men may come into communication with the deepest ground of God. The spirit of sonship which Christ freely gives to all men, is their spirit of access. There is nothing in the Divine Nature which, in Christ Jesus, is not open to men. His Spirit in men, according to their ability, may search into all things, yea even the deep things of God. Jew and Gentile and men of every kindred and name by One Spirit draw their supplies of wisdom and love, purity and power, from the infinite fullness of God; and in the same Spirit have fellowship one with another.

4. He has brought *Equality*. Formerly they were 'strangers and foreigners,' now they are 'fellow-citizens with the saints.' In the Temple at Jerusalem, separating the holy area, the court of the Israelites, from the outer precincts, was a stone wall or balustrade, beyond which no Gentile was allowed to pass. At intervals along this barrier were tablets, some in Greek, some in Hebrew, warning the alien not to trespass on pain of death. Only a few years ago one of these inscriptions was recovered from the dust where it had lain for long centuries. Their Roman masters, we are told, respected and sanctioned this fierce ordinance of the Jews. The Jews were allowed to inflict the penalty of death even on a Roman citizen, if he passed within the barrier.

To St. Paul these things were an allegory, This stern prohibition, this relentless barrier, this rigid line of demarcation, this reservation of the inner sanctuary for the Jew, this extrusion of the Gentile into the outer court—was it not a type, an exemplification of that rancour of Jewish exclusiveness which imperilled the infancy of the Christian Church? Yes, they would have imported into this later and nobler sanctuary, this second temple, this spiritual edifice, the arrangement of the material building. They would have drawn a hard line between the sons of Abraham and these dogs of Greeks; they would have erected a middle wall of partition; they would have thrust out the Gentiles into the outer court, whence with yearning eyes they might peer over the intervening wall into the inner sanctuary, their exclusion being rendered all the more galling by the proximity of the view.

This distinction, this exclusiveness, on which Jewish Christians insisted, was, in the Apostle's eyes, the direct negation of the gospel of Christ. Jesus Christ had broken down the middle wall of partition. On the area thus cleared, He had erected a larger, loftier, nobler temple, a universal brotherhood which acknowledged no preference and knew no distinctions. In Jesus Christ was neither Jew nor Greek, but Christ was all, and in all.

¶ In consecrating the new Cathedral in Lahore Bishop French pleaded earnestly that 'no invidious exclusiveness of race' might begrudge poor native Christians their rightful share in the cathedral. 'The sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord,' he quoted from Is. lvi., 'even them will I bring

to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer.' And with a characteristic prophetic fervour he anticipated a day when 'the long-severed East and West' should meet in common worship:

'Even such a thing might happen as St. Chrysostom tells happened in a Greek church at Constantinople. He was about to preach himself, but a Gothic priest came in with a number of his people, and he, the Greek archbishop, gave up his pulpit for that day. And so before the polished Greeks was heard the rough and (then) uncultured tongue of our northern forefathers, and they learnt the lesson that in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, Briton nor Hindu, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ all and in all.'[1]

5. He has brought *Fraternity*. Formerly Jews and Gentiles were at enmity, now He 'has reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.'

The object of the gospel is not to create barriers but to throw them down. Wherever the work of Jesus Christ gets fair play, the logical result of His principles is to make peace, and to break down, in the strength of Christian brotherhood, all harmful walls of partition.

(1) *Between nation and nation.*—Christianity includes in theory every child of man. The old idea of national gods has gone for ever and the Christian God is 'Maker of all things and Judge of all men.' Hence Christianity is bound to oppose war. The day has not yet come in which men settle international differences without the appeal to the sword, but there is a growing sentiment as to the horror and unrighteousness of war, and a greater reluctance to enter light-heartedly upon it. The vision of Tennyson is, let us hope, daily becoming more and more of a possibility.

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue—
I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as yet so young?—
Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion kill'd,
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless Isles.

Hence again the missionary character of Christianity. It is a strange and regrettable phenomenon that some communities which pride themselves on democracy are most bitterly jealous as regards the colour line. But as practical Christian sentiment grows, the more will the conviction deepen that white or black, brown or yellow, stand all alike as the children of the one Father, redeemed by the one Saviour.

¶ All races have come into so close a contact that they cannot leave their attitude indefinite. Trade we must, meet we must, and we are bound to live in the vicinity of other nations. It is safe to say that the greatest danger to a League of Nations is likely to arise upon Eastern or African shores and to have its root in racial animosities. A situation such as that described by Maurice Evans[1] must be fraught with danger:

'The very atmosphere is charged with it [race distinction] in South Africa. A white oligarchy, every member of the race an aristocrat; a black proletariat, every member of the race a server; the line of cleavage as clear and deep as the colours. The less able and vigorous of our race thus protected find here an ease, a comfort, a recognition to which their personal worth would never entitle them in a homogeneous white population.

And we have all been enjoying this ease, comfort, power, as a matter of course, as our due. But in this world of compensations, of forces ever tending to the balance, we cannot simply take this good and ignore the responsibilities which ever accompany power. Yet this

[1] E. Stock, *An Heroic Bishop*, 59.

[1] *Black and White in South-East Africa*, p. 15.

is what we have been trying to do; to make the goods and evade payment. It will not do'

The author is right; it will not do. The mixture is far too inflammable for the future of civilization. Nor is it only in South Africa that we can discover the materials for a blaze.

Even if there were no risk of armed conflict, we could not afford to leave things as they are. Just as mercy 'blesseth him that gives and him that takes,' so contempt degrades the scorner almost more than it handicaps the scorned. There is hardly a vice so poisonous in the catalogue of human sin. The race that despises another, that sees in uncleanness a reason for aloofness and not for cleansing, that refuses the cup of cold water just because the thirsty sufferer is a little one, that finds in ignorance no call to enlighten but only an excuse for passing by on the other side, that race, in the mercy of divine justice, is doomed.[1]

(2) *Between creed and creed.*—No Christian holds that it does not matter what a man believes. Yet even in the case of creeds which lie outside Christianity, the Christian rejoices to recognize some fragments of the truth of God and to say of such faiths:

> They are but broken lights of thee,
> And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

It is a prominent Christian scholar who says that we cannot 'deny the presence of Christ's Spirit in persons and bodies other than Christians and the Church. Abraham and Isaiah, Socrates and Phidias, Buddha and Confucius, must all be reckoned as, each in his degree, a representative and organ of the eternal Church.' How much more, then, will Christ be 'our peace' as between Christian denominations! Is it not manifest that the more we fall back upon the Lord Himself, the more impossible will sectarian bitterness become for us? The old axiom of geometry reminds us that 'things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another.' And if the members of the various Christian bodies are in very truth striving to serve and honour the same Master, surely they must be fashioned into something of the same likeness. Rivalry and rancour grow to them less and less tolerable in the common service of Him who is 'our peace.'

(3) *Between class and class.*—Classes there must always be, and will be, under any system of social organization, because of the simple fact that men's powers and characters are not on a dead level. So far is it from being true that all men are equal that it would be much truer to assert that no men are equal. For the principle which runs through God's Creation is diversity rather than uniformity. But what Christian feeling forbids is class bitterness, class jealousy, class strife. Here again, Christ is our peace. We shall find our balm of Gilead in the healing power of Christian gentleness, Christian forbearance, and the Christian maxim: 'Doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself.' So falls the wall of partition between class and class.

¶ Do you think it is fantastic to appeal to the Crucifixion of Christ as the solution of our labour troubles? Then read the story of Bishop Westcott's intervention in the Durham coal strike. He knew little of the points in dispute. But he invited the two Committees of Masters and Men to Bishop Auckland, and urged upon each the necessity of seeing the matter from the other's point of view; and all the time when he was not with them he was praying in the Chapel. A settlement was reached and the settlement proved sound.[1]

[1] F. Lenwood, *Social Problems and the East*, 138.

The Cross a Leveller.

Eph. ii. 13, 14.—'But now in Christ Jesus, ye who were once afar off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.'

The Cross of Christ is a leveller. It breaks down the middle walls of partition between nations and stations and sects.

[1] W. Temple, *Repton School Sermons*, 174.

1. *It levels.*—The idea of levelling has been the ideal of most of the great democratic movements. People have often spoken of all sorts of advanced and progressive speakers as 'Levellers.' It has been one of the terms of contempt flung at the heads of those who stood for advance generation after generation. There is nothing in the world that levels like the Cross of Jesus Christ. It simply declines to regard any of the artificial distinctions that men make. It is profoundly true that 'it breaks down the middle walls of partition.' It is the death of Christ that breaks down the middle walls. It recognizes no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, the Englishman and the foreigner, the bond and the free, the aristocrat and the tramp, the man and the woman; nor has it respect for any of the artificial distinctions which men have created. The 'caste' system has been little more tyrannical in India than in England; but the Cross of Jesus Christ destroys caste, along with the other works of the devil.

¶ Dr. Narayan Sheshadri had been a *Brahman*: those who listened to his message and entered the Christian Church in Jalna were almost to a man members of the Māng community. What this signifies, as indicating the completeness of the transformation of values which Christ brings, it is not easy for a foreigner to realize. 'Brahman' symbolizes the last extremity of social and religious arrogance and exclusiveness, an inheritance of pride and privilege, unbroken through three thousand years: 'Māng' signifies the unspeakably abject. . . . Every people has its arrogancies and its exclusions: there have been Greeks and barbarians, Jews and Gentiles: there is talk to-day of 'the white race' and the yellow peoples. But nowhere has the contempt for the 'lesser breeds without the law' organized itself into a system so rigid and so relentless as in India. There is no loophole of escape from the rule of the tyrant except that which is open to all members of the human family—death.

Of these 'depressed' classes, to use the name commonly applied to them in India, there are nearly sixty millions. They are—to use another significant designation—'untouchables.' They, too, have among themselves various grades of abjectness and in the hierarchy of this underworld the Māng has no place of pride. The two principal castes of 'untouchables' in the Marātha country are the Mahārs and the Māngs, and the Māngs have always been reckoned as the lower of the two in the social scale. It is said among them that in pre-British days the Brāhman rulers imposed three rules upon them to limit the range of their pollution. They had to wear a collar of wool about their necks that all might know them to be Māngs. They had to walk with a branch of a tree hanging from their backs and sweeping the roads behind them that the print of their unhallowed feet might not remain in the dust. They must spit into a vessel that they carried with them, for only the high caste man was to be allowed the privilege of thus contaminating the highway. . . .

But in Jalna and elsewhere Christ has done the impossible and caused these extremes to meet. He has broken down a middle wall of partition far more deeply based in prejudice than that between Jew and Gentile. The Māng entering the Christian Church was passing from slavery to at least the possibility of freedom, and the door of escape was opened wide for him by one who, when a Brāhman, had represented the very order that had enslaved him.[1]

2. *It levels down.*—There is nothing more democratic than the evangelical doctrine of sin. It says, 'All have sinned.' All! There is no difference. It acknowledges no difference between the best man and the worst man. You cannot have anything more democratic than that. It includes the saint and the sinner, and says they all need to cry, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' There is nothing more democratic than the doctrine of sin. John Foster once wrote an essay on this subject—'The Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion.' Why did the men of taste dislike it? For this simple reason—they hated to be told they were poor sinners in the sight of

[1] N. Macnicol, *Tom Dobson*, 98.

God; but it is necessary, according to the evangelical conception of religion, that a man of refinement and taste should realize he is a sinner, even as a murderer or a thief realizes it.

¶ It was exactly so in the eighteenth century. The Evangelical Revival consisted in teaching sin and the forgiveness of sins. An aristocratic lady wrote to the Countess of Huntingdon, who had sent her an account of the Evangelical Revival, and had told her that all aristocratic ladies were sinners just like their poorer sisters. She replied in words to this effect: 'It is monstrous to be told I am a sinner, and as much in need of a Saviour as the common wretches that crawl the ground.'

3. *It levels up.*—Evangelical theology tells us of the magnificent future coming to the people who realize their sin and wickedness. 'Unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us *kings and priests* unto God and his father: to him be glory and dominion for ever.' Evangelical theology tells us of the splendid dignity that comes to the man who is humiliated in the dust and trusts in Christ to be raised by Him into the heavenly places. He takes a share in unsearchable wealth. Many poor people are richer than millionaires because they have the unsearchable riches of Christ.

¶ You remember that exquisite story of Ian Maclaren's—the story of the old doctor come to his death-bed. Dr. Maclure had lived a life of splendid service, and the only text for his tomb seemed, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend.' He lay on his bed dying, and he called his old friend, a Scotchman, to him. They had never talked on religion to each other. They kept up a very strong reserve. Though sometimes their souls had touched, their words had never touched. Very quietly the old doctor said, 'Will you read for me from the Bible?' And his friend, remembering what he had read to his dying mother, opened the Bible at the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, and began: 'In My Father's house are many mansions.' The doctor stopped him.

It's a bonnie word, an' yer mither was a sanct; but it's no for the like o' me. It's owre gude; a daurna tak it. Shut the buik an' let it open itsel', an' ye'll get a bit a've been readin' ev'ry nicht the laist month.'

Then his friend opened it again and found the story of the publican standing afar off, who would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, and said, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

'That micht hae been written for me or any ither auld sinner that hes feenished his life, an' hes naethin' tae say for himsel',' said the doctor.

That is the word for us all. For the best, for the worst, for the highest, for the lowest, for the foulest sinner, for the sweetest saint, that is the universal word. We are all one blood, all tainted with one disease, all have one remedy—'God be merciful to me a sinner.' God give us to see even now that He has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. God make us to be kings and priests unto Him.[1]

Internationalism.

Eph. ii. 15.—'That he might create in himself of the twain one new man.'

St. Paul is here speaking of two nations or races, not of two men. He is telling the Ephesians, who were Gentiles, that in Christ the middle wall that separated them from the Jews has been broken down. Christ has made Jews and Gentiles 'both one.' And then he calls the two races thus united in Christ 'one new man.'

1. Jesus Christ can create a new man! He can evolve a fresh type of manhood nobler than any that has preceded it, and adapted to a world at peace. The dullest eye can see that there is a fierce struggle for existence to-day among the various types of manhood. The broad divisions are between men of

[1] J. E. Rattenbury, *Six Sermons on Social Subjects*, 86ff.

different colours. The dominant type at present is the white man. But newspapers speak constantly of the Yellow Peril. The yellow man and the white man have lived in ignorance of one another for centuries. But under the pressure of advancing civilization, they have met one another face to face. The white man's assured superiority has been emphatically questioned. Already the two types are menacing one another. White man says to yellow man, 'Thus far shalt thou come and no farther.' Only the dullard believes that this is the last word.

Meanwhile upon the horizon another cloud is rising. It is not bigger than a man's hand at present, but it is becoming bigger every day. The hand is not yellow, it is black. White men have not only aroused the yellow men, they have stumbled upon the black men too. Any idea that there can be a conflict between these types is pooh-poohed by some people, whose vocabulary is made up largely of varieties of 'pooh-pooh.' Shrewder observers speak more guardedly. They remember the countless numbers of these dusky hordes, and with a shivering glance at the picture of the sack of Rome by the Goths, they ask whether modern society may not be in danger of overthrow by these rude but resistless races.

Nor does this conflict of colour exhaust the situation. Within the concert of white peoples there are warring types. The condition of Europe shows that the nations are all struggling to overtop one another.

Now a student of history or of science can scarcely believe that any one of these types of manhood is destined to sway the globe. Certainly no reader of the Bible can believe it for a moment. Neither the white man, nor the yellow man, nor the black man is the ideal man. Neither the Briton with his liquor, nor the German with his army, nor the American with his trusts, can claim to be worthy to receive the dominion. Is, then, peace impossible?

2. Must the struggle between races go on for ever? Not if Jesus Christ is permitted to produce universally the new type of manhood—the Christian. He says that He can make in Himself, of all of the existing types, one new man, and that will bring peace. Unquestionably the claim has very much to commend it.

(1) For one thing, this mode of making peace is entirely congruous with all we know of God's way of saving man.

I keep two books side by side on my shelves in order that their titles may catch my eye at the same moment. One is Darwin's 'The Descent of Man,' and the other is Drummond's 'The Ascent of Man.' I do this that Darwin's marvellously skilful argument for the Creator's method of originating man may be completed by Drummond's marvellously beautiful history of the Creator's design in training man. Science has written a daring romance, telling us of an evolutionary process by which the type of man, as it exists to-day, has emerged gradually from previously existing types; and unless evolution is seen altogether out of focus, every intelligent reader of the romance recognizes that this evolution has been an upward process. It has been an ascent, not a descent; a slow but steady climb away from the slime of animalism towards the purity of a more spiritual life. Instructed by this wonderful story, the modern mind cannot help looking for the reign of universal peace through the emergence of a higher type of manhood.

(2) Moreover, the method by which Jesus Christ secures this new type conforms perfectly to what we recognize as God's law of development. It is not secured by giving an arbitrary victory to some earlier type, but by the fusion of existing types in a higher and nobler unity. Consider this matter historically, and ask what exactly Jesus Christ has done. Before He appeared there were two clearly-marked models, the Jew and the Gentile. The Saviour did not destroy these, nor did He select one of them for supremacy. He used both of them in creating a new man —the Christian. This Christian was neither a Jew nor a Gentile. He was found in Jerusalem, and in Ephesus, and in Corinth, and

in Rome. Wherever he was found he was distinguished by the new element which Jesus Christ had introduced into his character. Whether he had been a Jew or a Gentile did not matter. He had been Christianized.

¶ The story of Paul's missionary travels and the foundation of his Churches is familiar to everybody from the Acts. It is important to try and get some idea of what it was, in fact, that he was doing. And it comes to this: he was giving conscious unity to the highly heterogeneous elements in the lower strata of the population. He was building up a vigorous corporate life, informed by a common religious inspiration, in the great cosmopolitan centres of the Empire. Jews and Greeks, Romans, Thracians, Dacians, slaves and free men, coloured men and white men, people of all religions or of none, educated and illiterate, who jostled one another in the streets of the great towns like Ephesus and Corinth, suddenly found themselves one family, actuated by one purpose, bound by a new and higher allegiance, bought with a price by one common Redeemer. They were made one man in Christ Jesus. They were bound together in new social contacts, entrusted with new mutual obligations, submitting together to a new moral discipline.[1]

(3) Now, this new man, the Christian, had been formed out of both Jewish and Gentile elements. Certainly Judaism contributed towards the formation of the new man. Without Judaism the Christian could never have been born. But it is a commonplace of New Testament study that if Christianity had not struggled free from the swaddling clothes in which its Jewish mother sought to bind it, it would not have survived the first century. Both Jewish and Gentile influences have united to construct the Christian ideal. Our Lord made the new man 'of the twain in Himself,' utilizing the good of Jew and Gentile, but uniting them in a higher life which received its unique glory from Himself. Now this is just how we should expect God to work. The Father has not been idle during the long centuries of waiting. He has been preparing the world for peace, guiding the race towards that ideal manhood which has been revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Probably all the chief existing types can contribute something towards the ideal man. All the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into the eternal city, which comes down from God out of heaven and in which He dwells with men. There is room in the new man for the alertness of the West and for the patience of the East. The Briton may contribute his love of liberty, the American his commercial capacity, the German his industry, the Hindu his fortitude, the Chinese his homage, the African his fidelity. The Saviour does not quench the smoking wick, nor break the bruised reed. Rather He constrains them to add something to the world's light and strength.

(4) But He produces a nobler type than any one of these, by fusing all that is good in them in a higher unity—a new man. And the abiding glory of the new man is that he is 'Christian.' He is not specifically Eastern or Western, British or German or Japanese, though his natural characteristics are not destroyed. He is conformed to the image of the Son of God. The lonely loveliness of Jesus Christ is impressed upon the new man, and in that loveliness all the earliest variations of type find that their perfection, and therefore this new type of manhood may be universal.

(5) Again, we may make an appeal to the facts of history. The conception of one new man who recognizes his essential unity with all other representatives of the same type is not a dreamer's baseless fabric. To-day there are men and women of every colour and of almost every country who are Christians. We know by experience that the new type of manhood evolved by Jesus Christ can be universal. And when this type is universal, when all men everywhere are Christians, there will be established a universal brotherhood which is a guarantee of universal peace. Therefore the missionary operations of the Church should be directed towards producing this type everywhere.

[1] F. R. Barry, *St. Paul and Social Psychology*, 56.

Our missionaries are not vandals but empire-builders. Instead of being iconoclasts whose business is to break down, they are the real imperialists, eager to construct a world-wide empire ruled by the highest type of manhood. We do not send out our sons and our daughters to India, to China, to Africa, to sweep away all heathen philosophies and moralities, or to annihilate all local peculiarities, but to conserve the good everywhere and to graft it on to the living tree of Christianity, that it may bear its Christian fruit. We are not subscribing to Europeanize the peoples of other continents, to impose a Western civilization upon an unwilling East. Our business is to take them that power which can lift their imperfect life into Christian loveliness, as the kiss of the sunrise paints the bare hills with roseate beauty. These nations stand like statues of many shapes and colours in the great halls of the world. Christ comes not to strike them from their pedestals to make room for another statue dressed in a frock coat and a top hat, but to impart the flush of life to all of them, that 'the nations may walk in the light' of God.[1]

¶ By the second century, at any rate, the average Christian had come to regard himself as a member of a new Fellowship coterminus with, but different from, the world. 'Christians,' said one of them in a public tract, 'are not different from the rest of mankind in country or language or customs. They do not live in special cities of their own. They do not speak a peculiar dialect or practise any social idiosyncracies. They live in Greek or Barbarian cities according as each man's lot has fallen to him. They follow the customs in which they were brought up in dress and diet, and other ways of life. And yet in a marvellous and admittedly startling way they show forth the constitution of their own Commonwealth. They live in their own countries, but are there as pilgrims. They share in everything as citizens, and yet submit to everything as aliens. Every foreign land is their country, yet every country is a foreign land to them. They pass their time upon the earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. . . . They are attacked by the Jews and persecuted by the Greeks as belonging to another race, yet those who hate them can give no reason for their hostility. In one word, *what the soul is to the body, that Christians are to the world.* The soul extends through all the limbs of the body: so do Christians through all the cities of the world. The soul has its habitation in the body but yet it is not of the body: so Christians have their habitation in the world and yet they are not of the world.'[1]

In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North,
But one great Fellowship of Love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

In Him shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find.
His service is the golden cord
Close binding all mankind.

Join hands then, Brothers of the Faith,
Whate'er your race may be!—
Who serves my Father as a son
Is surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both East and West,
In Him meet South and North,
All Christly souls are one in Him,
Throughout the whole wide earth.[2]

[1] J. E. Roberts.

[1] *Epistle to Diognetus*, chaps. v. and vi.
[2] John Oxenham.

ACCESS.

Eph. ii. 18.—'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.'
Eph. iii. 12.—'In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.'
Rom. v. 2.—'By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.'

1. The Greek word which is translated 'access' in the Authorized Version, and retained in the Revised, is commonly used transitively in Greek literature, and there are commenators who seek to retain that sense in the New Testament and translate the word 'introduction.' But the intransitive sense, which is not unknown in classical Greek, is preferable. The meaning is therefore 'way of entrance.' And as the article accompanies the Greek word in two of its three occurrences in the New Testament, it is the well-known way of entrance to the presence and favour of God, the way opened for us by Jesus Christ.

(1) In Rom. v. 2 it is used of the entrance upon, or the introduction to, the state of grace, or the Christian state, which in the context is described as that of justification, of acceptance and peace. This state is a new relation to God which is established and constituted by the Redeemer's gracious and atoning sacrifice, the benefits of which are immediately secured by faith. These benefits embrace the whole content of the Christian salvation—justification, acceptance, all the privileges of Divine sonship, with the hope of coming glory. Our access to this state has been established through the incarnation and death of the Son of God, who bears away the sins of men and gives them power to become sons of God. It is not merely an open way; it is an actual leading of men into this blessed state by One who takes them in hand and conducts them into the blessedness and peace of the Divine kingdom.

(2) In Eph. ii. 18 it is clear that much more is meant than the open way to God. It is an actual and effectual introduction of a personal kind, which begins a state of friendship and fellowship by means of the indwelling spirit common to all believers. In the former text the Christian state as a whole is in view, as that to which Christ introduces us; here we are shown the still higher sphere of Divine fellowship, of filial privilege and power which Christ opens up to us, and into which He conducts us. Jew and Gentile have their *access* to the Father through the Son by one Spirit. All outward differences which separate and divide men fall away in presence of the higher unity which is produced by the life of God mediated by Christ and the Spirit of Christ.

(3) In Eph. iii. 12 *access* is viewed as a standing condition of the life of faith, a state of exalted confidence, boldness, and freedom which faith in Christ ever sustains and renews. It secures all the possibilities of a free and joyous fellowship, and provides the power by which the energies and needs of the higher life may be sustained and filled. The filial spirit is nourished and enlarged from the fulness of the Divine life and love.[1]

2. But the idea of access in the New Testament is of far wider extension and far deeper penetration than the occurrences of the word so translated. Of the Epistle to the Hebrews it may be said to be the central thought. Certainly the passage x. 19-22 has been properly described by C. J. Vaughan as 'the turning-point of this great Epistle.' The passage is, 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having

[1] A. F. Simpson, in *The Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, i. 63.

our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.'

The exhortation is deeply tinged with expressive colouring, drawn from the ceremonial of the Day of Atonement as we find it minutely detailed in the 16th chapter of Leviticus. On that Day of Atonement sacrifices were offered on the great brasen altar outside the tabernacle, first by the priest for himself, then by the priest for the people. In either case the blood of the slain victim was carried by him within the curtain which separated the outer from the inner chamber of the sanctuary, and it was sprinkled by him upon the mercy-seat covering the ark, as a typical reconciliation between a holy God and a sinful people. Only once in the year did any human eye penetrate that innermost shrine, or rest upon the sacred emblems contained within the mysterious curtain. That was the curtain which was rent in twain, by no human hand, at the moment of the death of the Saviour—the Holy Ghost thus signifying that by that death upon the Cross the way into the true Holy of Holies, God's Presence, was now at last opened to His sinful creatures; that they might go in and out without let or hindrance, according to their need, finding mercy for past transgression and grace to help in time of need.

Four things are involved in the thought of access—first, that the way has been closed by sin, next, that it must be reopened, then that it has been reopened by Christ, and lastly that, the way being now open, we have free entrance.

I.

THE WAY IS CLOSED.

Sin, and the 'conscience of sin,' together form the great obstacle between God and man. The Word of God declares this plainly: 'Your iniquities have *separated* between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you'; and the heart of man acknowledges the truth in the deprecatory cry of St. Peter, 'Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' So we find it in the history of our first parents. Before they were 'driven out' from the Garden of Eden, they sought in vain to hide 'themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.'

Whenever a man is living in sin and finds pleasure in it, the thought of God is no comfort or rest, but bitterness and disquiet, and he flees from communion with Him. For sin takes away the very conditions which make the thought of God the stay of the soul. When external troubles or anxieties come upon a man, troubles uncaused by anything he has done, but none the less oppressive, there is no consolation or rest like that of laying the whole before God, and leaving the solution of it in His hands. It is not our own doing, its causes are independent of us; God will accept the burden we lay upon Him, and sooner or later 'unto the godly there ariseth light in the darkness.' But when our own sin has caused it, and we will not cease from the sin, there is no comfort in appealing to God. The first condition of His help is wanting; we dare not give up the very cause of the trouble that is weighing us down. So the sinner shrinks from the one source of comfort, and cuts himself off from communion with God. For he trembles before the wide and unyielding claims of God on the soul. He wants to keep something back, to retain one 'bosom sin,' to hide a part of himself from the Divine eyes; and God claims the whole or will have none. We all know how men shrink from even a human friend lest some secret fault should be revealed to his intimate insight; and that is the feeling which, when a man is living in sin, keeps him back from communion with God, and alienates him from the Divine strength and life. He cannot find rest in putting aside his burden, for it is laid upon him by his unforsaken sin; he dare not face his Divine Friend with his mind dwelling on his sin, delighting in it, clinging to it. So his sin separates him from God.

¶ Who can estimate or calculate how far it is possible for an alien soul to get away from God? Scientific men have demonstrated the

immense and incalculable distances which obtain in space, and when we try to realize them, they only baffle and bewilder the imagination. But material is almost as nothing compared with moral and spiritual distance, which measures the case of those who are alienated from God in heart and soul and sympathy.[1]

II.

THE WAY MUST BE OPENED.

There remains in the heart of the sinner an instinctive feeling that access to God is an indispensable condition of human life. Even the murderer Cain utters this as his complaint: 'My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and *from thy face shall I be hid.*' The sense of sin, when it arises—the 'conscience of sin'—only intensifies this dreadful conflict of soul. The first cry of the penitent is, 'Hide thy face from my sins'; but the next is, 'Cast me not away from thy presence.' The true, deep, underlying need of the human soul is expressed in those fervent words of the Psalmist, 'My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?'

It is a boon which all men when deeply moved have longed for. 'Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!' I have such need of God. My weakness cries aloud for His omnipotence, my ignorance for His wisdom, my penury for His unmeasured fullness. I have such need, and I fain would come, but there is something in me which deters me. There is in men an instinctive sense of the wrath of God, checking the impulse of approach; and often, as in a man paralysed, the heart goes out, but the limbs have no corresponding movement. That difficulty is figured in the veil—the tenuous, impalpable obstacle, which need not block the way of the feeblest, and yet can exclude the strongest. They need God, but, with all their wishing, they dare not come to Him.

[1] J. Morgan, *The Ministry of the Holy Ghost*, 248.

¶ A writer about China says, 'The Christian declares, I am a sinner; the Buddhist points to his heart, saying, Here there is no peace; but both mean the same thing. Both are anxious to have this miserable consciousness removed, and they are willing to do or suffer anything if only they can attain to mental rest.' For in human nature there is a prophetic sense that if we could come at God, for whom we were made, it would be well.[1]

III.

THE WAY IS OPENED.

1. Since it is sin that holds men back, God has found a way of dealing with it, and at His own cost. On the Cross we see One taking on Himself sins which were not His, bearing their penalty, and as a High Priest confessing that that penalty was due. 'Who is he that condemneth,' is Paul's challenge, when 'it is Christ that died?' Who, think you, will bar the way, when it is God Himself who bids us come? We have boldness to enter into the holiest of all; there is no place so high and terrible that we sinful men may not come to it. He is able to present us in the presence of His glory—with exceeding joy. That is the faith of the New Testament.

2. How did our Lord open the way? 'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' By the sublime condescension of the Incarnation, He lifts us up, and brings us back to God. It is the Incarnation of the Son of God that stoops down to lift us up; it is His life on earth that draws us towards the Father; and it is His death that finally and supremely wins the access for us. He 'suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God' (1 Pet. iii. 18).

¶ So utterly did He, the Son of God, who for us men and our salvation was made man, identify Himself with sinful humanity, that in the work of making atonement He was for our sakes 'made sin' also, to use the boldest

[1] W. M. Macgregor, *Jesus Christ the Son of God*, 181.

of all Paul's expressions (2 Cor. v. 21), accepting to the full the consequences of man's sin, even to the sense of separation from God's fellowship, which is sin's last judgment and most terrible sequel, thus 'tasting death' for every man (Heb. ii. 9). This is an awful thing to say, the very essence of awfulness; but it is in this that the New Testament finds the measure at once of the sin of man and of the love of God that would redeem even at such a cost a world of sin. For this was a sense of forsaken-ness and dereliction which He experienced, in some way which we cannot fully understand but which we can never dismiss, in order that it may never have to be ours. As Mrs. Browning has expressed it in moving and solemnizing words in her 'Ode on Cowper's Grave':

Yea, once, Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe hath shaken—
It went up single, echoless, 'My God, I am forsaken!'
It went up from the Holy's lips amid His lost creation,
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation!

It cost God that, it cost Christ that, to deal savingly with sinful men.[1]

3. The design of that sacrifice was that sinful men might now be free to serve the living God. The consciousness of evil filled Isaiah with dread, when he saw the Divine glory in vision and heard the ceaseless cry of the seraphim—'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts'; and when we come into the presence of the living God—know that He is near to us, that His very eye is upon us, that His thoughts are occupied with us, that we are face to face with the High and Lofty One, whose name is Holy—the consciousness of sin oppresses and paralyses our spiritual powers, and we sink terror-stricken into the dust at His feet. Our strength is dried up; heart and flesh fail. It is then that the remembrance of His own humiliation for our sakes, and of the blood which was shed upon Calvary, restores our fainting spirits. We are unclean in our very souls; but the great sacrifice was offered that we might be able to worship God, and the remembrance of that relieves our fear. If the intellect cannot explain the Atonement, the heart and the conscience confess its power. Whatever other effects it may have, it has this —we can now venture to worship God.

[1] J. M. Shaw, *The Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God*, 128.

IV.

THE ENTRANCE IS FREE.

1. This access is free. At all times and in all places, all may draw nigh to God and hold fellowship with Him, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In the house or the school, the office or the workshop, amid the bustle of business or the silence of hillside, as well as in ordered service and holy sacrament, we may come, without let or hindrance, into the sanctuary of the Divine Presence.

Where'er we seek Thee, Thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground.

All that is necessary is that we come by the right way and in the true spirit. 'I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.' 'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' The 'way' is always open. The 'access' is ever accessible. All may come to the Father, and always come, and come in all places, if only they come by 'the new and living way' and 'by the one Spirit.' This doctrine of free access, of unfettered freedom, of unrestricted liberty in our approach to God is the necessary result of man's restored fellowship with the Divine love in and through Christ our one and only Mediator. It is the natural expression of the spiritual life, the right and privilege of every child of God.

¶ It is 'access' that we all have and this means not only an open door, but entire liberty of entrance; nay, a *welcome;* nay, an *introduction* to God; such an introduction as a friend at court gives, into the presence of the sovereign.[1]

[1] H. Bonar, *Light and Truth*, 39.

¶ When one of Abraham Lincoln's friends was going to call on him, he found outside the door a poor woman who was in great distress. She wanted to see the President at once that she might plead for her son who was to be shot the following day. But the doorkeepers refused to admit her. Lincoln's friend heard her story, and said, 'When I go in, slip in in front of me, and I shall see that you get to the President.' The doorkeepers strongly objected, but as they could not turn the woman out without being rude to the President's friend, they had to let her pass. So she reached the presence of Lincoln, who listened to her story and, having listened, pardoned her son.

2. It is free to all. 'Through him,' says St. Paul, 'we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father' (Eph. ii. 18). There is strong emphasis on the word '*both.*' The Jews were 'near,' 'a people near unto him' (Ps. xlviii. 14); but now they are nearer; they come *to* Him. The Greeks, 'far off' and 'alienated from the life of God,' now 'are made nigh by the blood of Christ,' and come into the very presence and love of God, with the Jews: just as near, for both come 'to the Father.' The High and Lofty One inhabiting Eternity dwells in humble and contrite Jewish or Gentile heart alike now; in equally intimate though ever adored and reverenced nearness.

¶ Religion cannot be reborn in our midst save as the faith of the common man, the glorious simple thing that all can share alike, that meets man's every need, that transfigures everyday tasks, that is passed from one to another, in market place and factory, that enters into and transforms our social life, our industrial system, our politics, our international relations, our inter-racial intercourse. This was the kind of religion Jesus brought to men. As we find this out, we come to see how great He is. The world of to-day has no place for a religious teacher who is merely concerned in bolstering up respectability, or in preparing a select few for a life of happiness hereafter. It wants someone who is big enough to face vested interests, conventional clap-trap, rooted prejudices, easy compromises, and great social evils. That is the kind of teacher we have in Jesus of Nazareth.[1]

3. 'Let us draw nigh.' It is a reiterated, a constant, a perpetual coming. 'Let us keep coming.' Not once a year, as on the Israelite's anniversary of atonement, but daily and hourly, in every stated and in every occasional service, in every periodical recurrence of the set times of worshipping, and in each special emergency of the natural or spiritual life. 'Let us keep drawing nigh.' If we could realize the two thoughts—that worship is a drawing nigh to a Person, and that that drawing nigh is the very condition and necessity of being—we should grow apace in the life of life.

¶ I quote here two brief passages from the beginning and the close of Henry Martyn's seven years of missionary life and witness for God. Going on board at Falmouth on July 31, to start on his nine months' voyage, and, in much solitude and agony of soul, endeavouring to comfort another in sorrow, lo! 'the blessed Spirit of God applied the blood of Jesus to cleanse away his sin, and restore him to comfort; and at night he committed himself to rest, so near to God, with such access through the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God, that, though tossed by the roaring surge, he was composed and peaceful with *the Everlasting Arms beneath him.*' Seven years pass, of daily dying and daily victory. He is on his way to England, worn out by fever and fatigue, done nearly to death by 'the merciless Hassan'; and on October 6, just ten days before he entered into rest, he wrote his last words: 'No horses to be had, so I enjoyed an unexpected repose. I sat in the orchard, and thought with sweet peace and comfort of my God, *in solitude my Company, my Friend and Comforter.*'[2]

[1] H. T. Hodgkin, *Lay Religion*, 43.
[2] A. E. Moule, *The Splendour of a Great Hope*, 177.

'Holy of Holies,' awful name—
Where, in a still retreat,
The Presence of the Godhead dwelt,
Upon the mercy-seat:
Veiled from the eye in darkness dim,
Enthroned between the cherubim.

Once in the year, within the veil,
In mystic robes arrayed,
The High Priest entered, and with blood
An expiation made:
But blood of victims could not cleanse
And purge the guilt of man's offence.

O Great Redeemer! God and Man,
Victim and Priest in one;
Thou, entering Heaven with Thine own Blood,
Didst once for all atone;
Thou hast removed the awful cloud,
Which once the oracle did shroud.

Now a bright Rainbow o'er the Throne
Sheds lustre from above,
Where showers of Judgment mildly shine,
Gilded by beams of Love;
Thy Blood, O Lamb of God, is there,
Pleading for us with ceaseless Prayer.

Cleansed by that Blood, we now approach
Boldly the Throne of Grace:
O may we, following the Lamb,
Come to that Holy Place;
Lord, Who for us didst deign to bleed,
Be Thou our help in time of need! [1]

The Trinity.

Eph. ii. 18.—'Through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father' (RV).

Paul is here describing man's salvation. It is one single thing—the saving of a man. And yet this simple act, salvation, is clearly divided into three parts. See how clearly St. Paul discriminates them. Every act is made up of a purpose, a method, and a power. And so the purpose and the method and the power are here. What is the purpose or the end? To the Father we all have access. What is the method? Through Jesus Christ. What is the power? By the Spirit. Through Christ Jesus we all have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father. In this one total act, the end, the method, and the power are distinguishable. Each stands out separate and clear. And what is more, each is distinctly personal. A personal name is given to the designation of each element. This salvation, which is all the work of God, first, last, and midmost, has its Divine personalities distinct for its end and its method and its power. It is a salvation to the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit. The salvation is all one; yet in it method, end, and power are recognizable. It is a three in one.

1. *The end* of human salvation is access to the Father. That is the first truth of our religion—that the source of all is meant to be the end of all, that as we all came forth from a Divine Creator, so it is to Divinity that we are to return and in it to find our final rest and satisfaction. Now we are very apt to take it for granted that, however we may differ in our definitions and our belief of the Deity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we are all at one, there can be and there is no hesitation, about the Deity of the Father. God is Divine. God is God. And no doubt we all assent in words to such a belief; but when we think what we mean by that word God; when we remember what we mean by 'Father,' namely, the first source and the final satisfaction of a dependent nature; and then when we look around and see such multitudes of people living as if there were no higher source for their being than accident, and no higher satisfaction for their being than selfishness, do we not feel that there is need of a continual and most earnest preaching by word and act, of the Divinity of the Father? Take a man who is utterly absorbed in the business of this world. How eager he is; his hands are knocking at every door; his voice is crying out for admittance into every secret place and treasure-house; he is all earnestness and restlessness. He is trying to come to something,

[1] Christopher Wordsworth.

trying to get access, and to what? To the best and richest of that earthly structure from which his life seems to himself to have issued. It is the society and the business of the world that have made him what he is, and so he gives up all that he is to the society or the business that created him. He devotes himself to it; he decks it with all the graces he can bestow upon it, because there is no higher Fatherhood present to his thoughts, because he knows no loftier God. Now to such a man what is the first revelation that we want to make? Is it not the Divinity of the Father? Here is a wonderful passage in the story of the Passover, where Jesus, with His agony before Him, is just rising to work His homely parable of washing the disciples' feet. And the description of the act is this: 'Jesus knowing . . . that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.' That was the key to all His life; the spring of every action. 'Knowing . . . that he was come from God and went to God,' knowing, that is, that God was His Father, the source and the satisfaction of His life. And that same knowledge which Christ had, we want others to have.

2. That is the Divinity of the end. We come from God and we go to God. And now pass to the Divinity of *the method*—through Jesus Christ. Man is separated from God. That fact, testified to by broken associations, by alienated affections, by conflicting wills, stands written in the whole history of our race. And equally clear is it to him who reads the Gospels, and enters into sympathy with their wonderful Person, that in Him, in Jesus of Nazareth, appeared the Mediator by whom was to be the Atonement. His was the life and nature which, standing between the Godhead and the manhood, was to bridge the gulf and make the road, over which blessing and prayer might pass and repass with confident feet for ever. And then the question is, Out of which nature came that Mediator? Out of which side of the chasm sprang the bridge? Evidently on both sides that bridge is bedded deep and clings with a tenacity which shows how it belongs there. He is both human and Divine. But from which side did the bridge spring? Who moved towards the reconciliation? It is the most precious part of our belief that it was with God that the activity began. It is the very soul of the gospel that the Father's heart yearned for us in our sin. And that He sent His Son to tell us of His love, to live with us, to die for us, to lay His life like a strong bridge out from the Divine side of existence, a bridge over which we might walk, fearfully but safely, back into the Divinity where He belonged. Through Him we have access to the Father. As the end was Divine, so the method is Divine. As it is to God that we come, so it is God who brings us there. We can think of nothing else without dishonouring the tireless, quenchless, love of God.

¶ The constraint or compulsion which led ultimately to Jesus' death was a constraint or compulsion which, while prompted thus by brotherly compassion and self-identifying love with needy and sinful men, was also and further the expression or outcome of *obedience to the will of God, and the carrying out of the Father's purposes.* The love to men, indeed, which He was manifesting was, He represented, a love that had its fontal source or spring not first in Himself nor in His own planning, but in the Father's mind and heart. His very presence in the world, in human nature and in human experience, was, He said, the outcome, not first of His own, but of the Father's love-devising. 'God (the Father) loved the world so dearly that he gave up his only Son' (John iii. 16). He came into the world, we have said, came as no other man has come, free-willingly; but He came, as He said Himself, not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work' (John iv. 34). 'What you hear me say is not my word, but the word of the Father who sent me' (John xiv. 24; *cf.* v. 23f., 36, vii. 16 *et passim*). It was to reveal the Father and the Father's love to men that He was in the world, and to reveal this love, not

in the abstract, but *in relation to the situation created by man's sin.*[1]

3. We have spoken of the end and of the method; but no true act is perfect unless *the power* by which it works is worthy of the method through which, and the end to which, it proceeds. The power of the act of man's salvation is the Holy Spirit. Through Christ Jesus 'we all have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' What do we mean by the Holy Spirit being the power of salvation? We are often deluded and misled by carrying out too far some of the figurative forms in which the Bible and the religious experience of men express the saving of the soul. For instance, salvation is described as the lifting of the soul out of a pit and putting it upon a pinnacle, or on a safe high platform of grace. The figure is strong and clear. Nothing can overstate the utter dependence of the soul on God for its deliverance; but if we let the figure leave in our minds an impression of the human soul as a dead, passive thing, to be lifted from one place to the other like a torpid log that makes no effort of its own for either co-operation or resistance, then the figure has misled us. The soul is a live thing. Everything that is done with it must be done in and through its own essential life. If a soul is saved, it must be by the salvation, the sanctification, of its essential life; if a soul is lost, it must be by perdition of its life, by the degradation of its affections and desires and hopes. And so when a soul comes to the Father through the Saviour, its whole essential vitality moves in the act. With those affections with which it has loved the world, it loves its Lord. With that same will with which it chose iniquity, it chooses now holiness and heaven. The whole capacity of life was there. Now the power of Life has entered in and is using it. And just this sometimes hides from us the essentially Divine character of the new spiritual life. It seems as if the Christian had simply chosen to love God instead of loving His business; but as he goes on and finds what this new love of God really means, he finds what it is that has happened. The capacities of faith and love and holiness have been taken possession of and filled out to their completeness by the very Spirit of holiness and love and faith which they were made to hold, but which is greater than themselves. The Divine power has taken possession of the soul's capacities. And, although it may seem at first as if the soul itself had originated this new movement to God through Christ, just as it may seem to the child at first as if his body did all these spiritual acts which the spirit does within it, yet, by and by, the conviction grows that it is not the soul's simple ability to be religious that has made it religious, but that God by direct visitation has occupied that ability and is drawing the soul to Himself; just as the child comes to distinguish between the body's mere ability to answer the mind's requirements, and the mind itself which uses the body as the servant of its needs.

When this experience is reached, then see what Godhood the soul has come to recognize in the world. First, there is the Creative Deity from which it sprang, and to which it is struggling to return—the Divine End, God the Father. Then there is the Incarnate Deity, which makes that return possible by the exhibition of God's love—the Divine method, God the Son; and then there is this Infused Deity, this Divine energy in the soul itself, taking its capacities and setting them homeward to the Father—the Divine Power of Salvation, God the Holy Spirit. To the Father through the Son, by the Spirit.[1]

I believe in Thee!
Father eternal,
Maker supernal
Of all that is, and that was, and is yet to be,
The passing, and the enduring infinitely,
And Love's Begetter from all eternity.
Maker and Father of all, Maker and Father of me,
My God, I believe in Thee.

[1] J. M. Shaw, *The Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God*, 111.

[1] Phillips Brooks, *Sermons*, 229ff.

I believe in Thee!
Supremest Lover
Who didst discover
The one sole way to vanquish the great-waved sea
Rolling 'twixt God and man unebbingly,
Till, smit by Thy lifted cross, it turned to flee.
Lover, Redeemer of all, Lover, Redeemer of me,
My God, I believe in Thee.

I believe in Thee!
Life's Lord, Life's Giver,
For aye and ever
Source and Fountain of boundless sanctity,
Pouring high sapience and wisdom royally
Down on Thy suppliant people, the blest, the free.
Thou who art fain to hallow all men, oh, hallow me,
My God, I believe in Thee.[1]

A Heavenly Citizen.

Eph. ii. 19.—'Ye are . . . fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.'

THERE is a memorable passage in Plato's *Republic* in which, after Socrates has shown that the upright man will direct his action towards his own moral growth, Glaucon says keenly, 'He will not, then, engage in politics.' 'Not in his native land, perhaps,' Socrates replies, 'unless some Divine event befall'—('unless some Divine event befall,' mark the reservation)—'but in his own true State he will.' 'You mean,' Glaucon answers, 'in the State which we were just framing, a State which is founded on theory, for I fancy it exists nowhere on earth.' 'True,' Socrates rejoins; 'nowhere on earth; but in heaven, perhaps, a pattern is laid up for whoever desires to see it, and seeing it, to make his home there.'

1. The Divine event for which the great teacher half-unconsciously looked has come to pass. Through the Incarnation every relation and circumstance of life has received a new meaning. 'Ye are,' the Apostle writes,—a Jew to Gentiles, with the exultation of victorious faith—'no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.' Spiritual outcasts before, they had found in their Father's home an eternal resting-place. They had been incorporated in a society of which Israel was but a shadow. They had been brought into fellowship with God Himself. Christians, as Christians—such is St. Paul's gospel, without any distinction of race, or class, or culture—are not 'one' only, but 'one man in Christ,' share in one Divine life, move on earth as possessors of a heavenly heritage, and charged with a heavenly service. They are members in that glorious Body through which the will of God is realized and made known by the Spirit sent in Christ's name. Pressed on every side by temporal anxieties, perplexed, baffled, cast down in the eyes of men, they still walk in the Spirit, rejoicing in the powers of the unseen world.

It has often been urged, and fanaticism from time to time has given colour to the accusation, that such teaching tends to disparage the common interests and obligations of earth. No charge can be more false. It transfigures them. It shows their transcendant significance. It reveals the eternal thought which is struggling towards manifestation through every energy of that nature which the Son of God has taken to Himself. The consciousness of a heavenly citizenship brings home to those enjoying it the type, the strength, the aim of the Christian life fulfilled on earth.

The simple joys and sorrows, the little duties and occupations of an obscure position have been brought into direct connection with God. In the record of the Saviour's work we learn to recognize an eternal element in commonest things: behind all is the Divine. The humblest, the feeblest, the most careworn among us who are in Christ are fellow-citizens with the saints. Our citizenship, our earthly

[1] Emily Hickey, *Later Poems*, 52.

citizenship can be fulfilled in heaven, for heaven is the welcomed presence of God. The pattern laid up in heaven has been brought to earth. If, then, we accept this pattern we shall find in our natural obligations not only the discipline which God has provided for our education, but also the work which He has prepared for us to do. We shall see that all human work is, from the nature of the case, potentially Christian work; that domestic, social, commercial, municipal, national activity, is part of the one human life which Christ has lived, an expression in due measure of the nature which He has borne to His Father's throne.

The light of God is falling
  Upon life's common way;
The Master's voice still calling,
  'Come, walk with Me to-day':
No duty can seem lowly
  To him who lives with Thee,
And all of life grows holy,
  O Christ of Galilee.

Who shares his life's pure pleasures,
  And walks the honest road,
Who trades with heaping measures,
  And lifts his brother's load,
Who turns the wrong down bluntly,
  And lends the right a hand;
He dwells in God's own country,
  He tills the Holy Land.

Where human lives are thronging
  In toil and pain and sin,
While clustered hearts are longing
  To bring the kingdom in,
O Christ, the Elder Brother
  Of proud and beaten men,
When they have found each other,
  Thy kingdom will come then.[1]

2. As we contemplate the heavenly pattern we recognize our ideal, and our hearts fail us at the remembrance of our weakness. But at once we are lifted out of ourselves. If, as we believe, all true life answers to a Divine archetype—a pattern in the heavens, if the Word, Himself God, became flesh, and by living hallowed life, and by dying conquered death, then we, with our infirmities and failures, are brought near to an inexhaustible spring of strength. We have a promise, in deed and not in word, which cannot fail. We have a full assurance that there can be no final defeat of God's righteous love. It has conquered on the Cross. We are not of ourselves or unto ourselves, but of God and unto God. We are—it is a marvellous phrase—'his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.' We and our works are God's making. The workman and the work correspond by a predetermined harmony. God gave and God gives us the strength we severally need: He provides for us the means and the occasions for doing Him service. He encourages us to feel—and the feeling is an inspiration which prevails over every misgiving—that He accomplishes His will through us. In some sense, according to the language of the ancient mystics, He needs us; and He opens our eyes to see the vision of our Master's glory, the transcendent victory of love through sacrifice.

We do not pretend that it is easy to present in a perfect embodiment the citizenship of heaven through the duties of earthly citizenship; we do not pretend that we have no formidable adversaries, seen and unseen, on the stage of earth and in spiritual realms; we do not pretend that the date of our victory is fixed within a certain time measured by rising and setting suns; we do not pretend that nothing depends according to the providence of God on human effort, painful, intense, prolonged. But we do maintain, in spite of all failures and delays and checks, that we must prove our Divine endowments in the affairs of the world; that those who are with us are more than those who are against us; that the communion of saints brings to us invigorating force now and here; that the victory of Christ is complete though every prize of it is not yet gathered; that no effort is lost, and no martyrdom—no life offered—is fruitless.[1]

[1] L. F. Benson.

[1] B. F. Westcott.

A Christian Citizen.

Eph. ii. 19.—'Fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.'

1. It is good for us to live at times in the companionship of such a man as St. Paul, a Christian citizen and, moreover, a Jewish patriot who, while passionately devoted to the good of his people, lived always as feeling himself a fellow-citizen with the saints and of the household of God—a household in which, as he pointed out, there is neither bond nor free, neither Jew nor Gentile, in which there are no party rivals, no class distinctions. It is through such companionship that we realize the life in Christ. To feel how such a man as St. Paul purifies and refines all he touches with the fire of his spiritual earnestness, and with his moral enthusiasm, may easily prove a transforming experience for us all. And the reflection that it is to such men that the world has always owed its best and highest influences brings it home to us that these gifts of spiritual earnestness and moral enthusiasm are essential to any life which is in any sense a Christian life. Without these gifts, St. Paul would have said to us, without these, what good thing do you hope to make of your citizen life? These are the gifts that stir men to passionate devotion to a duty or to a cause; and it is from lack of passionate devotion that so many good causes fail in our complex modern life. It is from lack of passion or devotion, and not from lack of belief in their goodness or in their essential claim.

What might we not make of our natural life if we could only kindle in men's souls through all grades of such a community as that which gathers in any great city, a keen and vivid consciousness of Christian citizenship growing out of the sense of our Christian brotherhood? What might we not do if in this spirit of moral enthusiasm men of power and light and leading were moved by a passionate devotion to cleanse the city from every unchristian influence? How different in such a case would be the common feeling as to what a city life should aim at being in all its manifold parts. How uneasy in their consciences would men be until the conditions of life in poorer and meaner streets were made very different from what they are to-day. How hateful to them would be the manifold temptations which are allowed to beset the weak and unfortunate amongst them. How different, in plain fact, would be men's dealings with regard to many public matters, such, for instance, as the trade in drink and the presence of insanitary and overcrowded houses on every side.

¶ Christianity, as we know, sprang out of Judaism, and the live wire of Judaism was the teachings of the prophets. Examine them; examine Amos and Micah, Hosea and Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, on to Malachi—the last of them—and you will find surprisingly little about a distant heaven. They are this-worlders, through and through. Here and now, as soon as may be, is to be the kingdom of God. And that kingdom is to consist in a right social condition. Their sermons are indictments of the people who are hindering that; indictments of priests who put ceremony before conduct; of land-grabbers who added field to field; of luxurious wasters who revelled and rioted while the people starved. The prophets were extremely unpopular with these classes, who gave them anything but a quiet time. But that was the religion they preached; and their preaching was the great preparation for the Christian Gospel.

What was that Gospel? We are apt to think of it as a purely spiritual message; a message for the soul. Assuredly it was that; such a message as the soul had never listened to before; and which, through ages, has brought to millions of hearts priceless treasures of strength and comfort. But it is extraordinary how our modern churchgoers, with the New Testament before them, have missed that other side of the matter; have missed the significance of the primitive Church as a social movement. The early disciples believed not only in the regeneration of the individual soul, but in the regeneration of the whole world-system. And they believed that it was coming

at once. Their Second Advent creed, the belief in the immediate re-coming of Christ, was at bottom a faith in a new world that was to supersede the old, bad, corrupt world. All those Apocalypses which the later Judaism had so lavishly produced, and which, remember, were a part of the furniture of the early Christian mind, were the heralds of a vast social reform movement, to be brought about by supernatural means. That these reformers, Jewish and Christian alike, were mistaken in their belief—mistaken as to the time and manner of the revolution—does not detract in the least from the quality of their idea. The point remains that religion to them held, as one of its prime factors, a social revolutionary element. It meant a reversal of the old-world evils, a reversal of the way in which men should live and work with each other. And so far as their power extended they carried out these principles among themselves. They carried out, in an infinitely better way than the French revolutionists, the idea of 'liberty, equality, fraternity.' They gave of their property to a common fund; they met together in a spirit of joyous fraternity at a common table. One in heart, they felt themselves one in all that belonged to the common life.[1]

¶ If Jesus were now to visit our large markets and manufactories, in which the close intercourse of numbers of human persons renders the opportunities of service and testimony to God so frequent, He would scourge men from them, as He scourged the traffickers of the Temple, for that they had forgotten that *here* was their Father's house, where their brethren had to be owned and helped, and their Father's glory revealed to the world.[2]

2. It is good also to live in the consciousness that our true city, the city of God, is in heaven. The Roman citizen, wherever he lived, was guided, influenced, and swayed by the all-pervading power, laws, and thoughts of the imperial city. It was out of sight, invisible, and unknown, as heaven is to us, yet it was always present with him, speaking to him and shaping his conduct. The saints have always been citizens of heaven in that sense; and Christians to-day have thus their citizenship in heaven. They are asked to carry into all scenes and societies the principles, the directing forces, and the very atmosphere of the city which is beyond the clouds. Their lives are to be ruled from above and not from below, and no matter what place they fill, there is to be that solemn sense of duty, that consciousness of a Divine superintendence, that promptness of obedience to the great Master's word, and that longing to bring all things into subjection to Him which made the saints strong, brave, and true, which lifts up and dignifies the very drudgeries of life, and makes every spot which a man treads a little like heaven itself.

¶ It used to be said of a Roman that wherever he went and whatever he did, he was a Roman still. He could never be anything else. I wish that could be said of every Christian as it ought to be. John Bright once confessed that he never gave an important vote or made a speech until he had wrestled in prayer for direction. If we did that—if we earnestly prayed each morning that in every action of the day we might feel the guiding hand of God—there would be a certain spiritual elevation in all that day's speech and conduct. It is a high reach, indeed, to be under heaven's rule continually. It seems too high for us weak mortals, yet it is what all the saints tried to realize; and it is by following out that, in a measure, that we become fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God.[1]

[1] J. Brierley, *Religion and To-day*, 21.
[2] G. A. Smith.

Fellowship.

Eph. ii. 19.—'Fellow-citizens with the saints.'

We are so made that we need each other in all departments of life, and supremely in this one. We can and do mediate God to one another. By fellowship we rise to experiences which are impossible otherwise.

[1] J. Percival.

1. This does not merely mean fellowship with living contemporaries. The greatest spirits of all history still offer us their fellowship with royal generosity through their books. All who have lived lives of real discipleship—all who have had real experience of the Christian way—all who have conquered and many who have largely failed, still offer us help beyond all price by what they have put of themselves into their writings. Along this way, they declare, we found life: along that way we found death. By many a sorrow and many a failure, as well as by many a triumphant success, they have accumulated a store of wisdom which they share with us freely.

(1) It is thus that the reading of the Bible comes to have such a central place in the disciple's life. He will of necessity read much and often in the Gospels that he may increasingly know the mind of his Lord. But he will also read what Christ's great followers have to say about the Christian way, and he will draw from them both knowledge and inspiration. Possibly the reading of the Bible has come to seem to many a mere duty which they have been taught to perform, but which brings no real stimulus to their minds. But that is because it has been read merely as a duty, and perhaps in a rather mechanical way. Once we have learnt to feel in it the living beat of actual human lives, and to realize that these men were 'up against' a world very like ours, we shall discover a new reality in it, and therefore a new interest.

¶ Gathered within a narrow space, exhibited to a tiny number, unappreciated by most of those around them, the Portraits of this Gallery [the Men of the Bible] are none the less a miniature of Man. They are a delineation of the desires and intents of the heart throughout the wide world. They are no local mirror, no reflection of a special place or time. They exhibit not the national but the universal. We forget that the men were Jews. We forget their vicinity to Mount Zion and the Jordan and the Temple. We forget even their environment by Asia. We find that they have kept pace with Europe. Our shifting western scenery has not made them an anachronism. They are abreast of our varieties. They reveal human nature not only in its eternal sameness but in its eternal variations.[1]

(2) But it is not only the men of the Bible who have living things to say to us about the Christian way. In addition to them there stands near to us a great host of men and women, not dead, but merely out of sight, who offer us still their fellowship, and who have great experiences to share with us. Not only Paul, and John, and Peter, but also Augustine and Francis, and Thomas à Kempis—Luther and Bunyan, and Brother Lawrence—Wesley, and Woolman, and William Penn—Lincoln, and Livingstone, and Shaftesbury, and so on through all the ranks of that great and varied company who have loved the same Lord, and helped in the building of His Kingdom. These people make the great cloud of witnesses who still with sympathy and understanding watch the runners of to-day. He is no wise man who rejects their company and remains ignorant of all they have to teach. And their company is always available. Living souls who help us may at times be inaccessible, but everywhere and always these great and humble souls wait upon us. Through the literature of Christendom they are all within reach. We may pick and choose for ourselves. No two of us will select the same special persons. But each of us may, if we will, hold converse with some chosen band of great forerunners, who are able to cheer our despair, resolve many of our perplexities, and sustain us amid the ardours of the narrow way. And that is beyond all question one of the great resources of the disciple.

¶ How can I speak of the noble and holy host with whom he may consort who is on the heights? Poets, seers, prophets, masters of music, thinkers, leaders in action and philanthropy, warriors and saints of God. How can a man be poor who companions with these? Whenever I truly read a great book I am led up to the mountain-top with a great soul. Have you realized that? The man is sharing his thoughts with *me* and revealing his very

[1] G. Matheson, *The Representative Men of the Bible*, i. 19.

nature to *me*. And then I turn to the dictionary of biography and read that he 'died' in such-and-such a year. Why, he breathes his spirit into me, and I am revived! This is the year of his *life*.[1]

2. Then there remains the fellowship of other living disciples. It is difficult to overestimate the help that they are able to afford. Absolute statements are perhaps very seldom true ones, and there are possibly exceptional people who travel wonderfully on the Christian way though they seek no fellowship with others. They live apart and yet serve greatly. But they are the few and the peculiar. For the great mass of people a life of discipleship is well nigh impossible except in fellowship. It is one of the deepest of our instincts to seek the company of others when specially hard things have to be done. And discipleship always means specially hard things. Just as the other men in his platoon became for many a soldier the power that carried him through the terrors and abominations of the front, so in the Christian warfare it is the inspiration of the company of other soldiers that makes the campaign a possibility.

(1) To begin with, we need others for the enrichment and correction of our thinking about Christian issues. No one man ever saw all sides of truth. Perhaps no company of people can see all sides of it. But they can at least see a great many more than any individual. Probably we are only now beginning to discover all the value that there is in corporate thinking. What really explains the recent multiplication of conferences of many kinds is just the fact that when a number of people in any truly intimate way set themselves to seek after truth, they help each other to a larger view of it than is possible in any other way. When men and women, of various ages and of various types, all alike contribute what they know to a sincere discussion, the result is often a very rich one. One by one we are a prey to our own prejudices. Together we may surmount them if we will. It is the peculiar snare of deeply religious persons, to which perhaps the most earnest are most exposed, that they should think that all religious experience ought to be of the same type as their own, and that all people ought to see truth as they see it. But such private obsessions become impossible when men and women find themselves in the company of others whose spiritual power is beyond all question, but whose convictions and experiences vary widely.

(2) Then, further, most men find in time that they need the stimulus which comes to them from the faith and courage of others, and are immensely strengthened by association with those who are also trying to attain to discipleship. It is one thing to resolve to let all else go and follow the way of the Kingdom, but it is quite another to maintain that resolve amid 'the coiled perplexities' of our complicated modern life, and when subjected to all the strains for heart and head which belong to any modern calling. There are few who are not at times tempted to give in, and fewer still who do not find that their courage sometimes flags. At times it seems difficult to be interested even in the things we had meant to care about always. A certain paralysis of feeling is apt to descend upon us, and all the glow seems to go out of our beliefs and purposes. The case for cynicism will seem very strong, and the case for an easy-going attitude to life stronger still.

And then it is that through the fellowship of our fellow-travellers the greatest boons may come to us. As they allow us to share their life, new life seems to flow into us. By the influence of one belief is made clear again. Another seems able almost to bestow courage, and a third helps us to realize the presence of God once more. Men who had been feeling that they could not pray find themselves able to pray as the opportunity comes to them to be uplifted by the prayers of others. Men who had felt utterly drained of all enthusiasm find their empty beings filled when subjected to the contagion of the keenness of others. And so in the spiritual world we help each other up steep and slippery places, and find life

[1] Carey Bonner, *Up to the Hills*, 36.

growing richer and fuller as we give and take in the interchange of common life.

¶ 'Alas!' cried poor Mr. Feeble-mind, 'I want a suitable companion; you are all so lusty and strong; but I, as you see, am weak. I choose, therefore, rather to come behind, lest by reason of my many infirmities I should be both a burthen to myself and to you. I am, as I said, a man of a weak and a feeble mind, and shall be offended and made weak at that which others can bear. I shall like no laughing; I shall like no gay attire; I shall like no unprofitable questions. Nay, I am so weak a man as to be offended with that which others have a liberty to do. I do not yet know all the truth; I am a very ignorant Christian man; sometimes, if I hear some rejoice in the Lord, it troubles me because I cannot do so too. It is with me as it is with a weak man among the strong, or as with a sick man among the healthy, or as a lamp despised, so that I know not what to do.' 'But, brother,' said Mr. Greatheart, 'I have it in commission to comfort the feeble-minded, and to support the weak. You must needs go along with us; we will wait for you, and we will lend you our help; we will deny ourselves of some things, both opinionated and practical, for your sake; we will not enter into doubtful disputations before you; we will be made all things to you, rather than that you shall be left behind.'[1]

(3) And thirdly, it is surely plain that we need others if ever we are to take an effective share in the practical labours which the building of the Kingdom involves. The great tasks which await us are all of them such as can be achieved only by numbers of men and women working in concert. They defy the isolated individual. In order to count, a man must get into his place in the body of Christ. Just as a great building requires architects, and measurers, and labourers and skilled tradesmen of a score of different sorts and is a flat impossibility either to the individual or to a disunited mass of workers, so in the building of the Kingdom, unless we work with others, and according to some concerted scheme, we can achieve nothing.

[1] Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress.*

¶ Religion to-day is not merely a question of what Christ means for the individual but of what He means for the world. Does Christ mean anything for the stricken, confused, disturbed, restless world? The answer to that question can be given only by our common Christianity. By our common Christianity, however, we do not mean a Christianity reduced to the poor elements of what we all hold in common. We mean the precise opposite—something that is to us richer than anything any of us have yet got. For which of us has as yet fully apprehended Christ? To think that what we individually or the bodies to which we belong have apprehended of Christ is in any sense a full understanding of Him is to deny or to forget His inexhaustible fullness. Only the whole church can apprehend Christ.

Thus through all our contacts, as we bring each of us all the positive things we have apprehended, there is being evolved slowly in the common service of the non-Christian world some richer conception of Christianity than we have yet apprehended, something more worthy to win the affection and allegiance of non-Christian peoples. In our own committees and discussions of common problems, if we are alike faithful to what is true and best in our own tradition and ready and eager to learn from one another, there is a creative process at work, the wonder and splendour of which is often hid from our eyes. We are the instruments, often the unconscious instruments, of a purpose and creative power outside ourselves. Our feeble efforts at co-operation are, God be thanked, not ours alone. Through them in spite of our blindness and shortsightedness God is working out something grander than we know. Though we may not be fully aware of it, we are being led by Him into a larger and richer world. If only we are sufficiently open to the influences of His spirit and responsive to His call, the years that lie before us will be still richer than the century of missionary effort on which we to-day look back.[1]

[1] J. H. Oldham, in *Records of Missionary Secretaries*, 70.

The Household of God.

Eph. ii. 19.—'Ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.'

St. Paul's phrase, 'the household of God,' is but a reflection of the ever-recurring reference in Christ's teaching to God as the Father, both of Himself and of men. The idea of a household grows out of Christ's idea of God as *Father*, just as the idea in the word *citizen* in the previous part of the verse grows out of Christ's conception of the *Kingdom* of God. In another place, regarding the household, not in the light of its head, but of the spirit which binds us to this head, the Apostle calls it 'the household of faith.'

What are the essentials of a household? A household is a society marked by diversity in unity. It is like light, which is composed of the many colours of the spectrum, each colour having a character of its own, but, when all are combined, forming the pure white light by which we see and work. So a household is a combination—a unity of different characters under one head. It is not a uniformity in which all are alike, but a unity composed of diversity.

1. There is diversity of thought and of experience.

(1) First, *of thought*.—Each member may have ideas of his own. To insist that all should have the same views on all subjects—on politics, on art, on religion—would either rend the household asunder or drive the various members into silence. One result would be as bad as the other. No wise parent would take such a course.

The Church is a spiritual family, and should be regulated by like principles. The desire for uniformity of belief in the Church is based on utter forgetfulness of the diversities we have in mind and character. Identity of belief *cannot* be reached. It never has been reached even in Churches constructed on the uniformity principle. The divergencies of belief are as great in the Church of Rome as in the Free Churches. The very men who set their signatures to creeds interpret them in very different ways. They all look at the same things, but with different eyes, and from different points of observation. The same words mean different things to different men. Until all minds are constituted alike we shall never have identity of thought. Men read the same book and get different impressions from it. They look at the same landscape, and carry away different recollections of it. They associate with the same person and regard him in different lights. Even inspired men have not identical thoughts of the same subject. The Apostles all looked on the same Christ, but were impressed with points in His life that were quite distinct from one another. If the thoughts of John and Paul and Peter and James concerning Christ could be represented by four distinct pictures, they would be found to be alike and yet unlike. We should see that it was the same Christ they saw, but regarded from various standpoints.

(2) Second, *of experience*.—There is as great a variety of inward life as of mental thought in the members of a family. In each there are abysmal depths of feeling and experience which not even the dearest may sound. Every thoughtful parent sometimes looks at his children and wonders what is moving in each of their hearts—those hearts which, though revealed by their faces, are yet more largely concealed. And that mysterious thing we call personality involves the idea that each must have an experience of its own—distinct, separate from that of all others. The trustful, confiding nature will travel by an easy way to the Cross, but the enquiring, critical nature will have to move along a road full of obstacles. The practical nature will obey without questioning, whilst the philosophical nature will need to see the reason before it can obey. The gentle, guileless nature will move to the better life scarcely conscious of crisis or change, whilst the warm-blooded and high-spirited may have to go through a veritable conflict before it is enrolled in the ranks of Christ.

Christ concerned Himself with the end, not with the road by which it was reached. Did men believe and love? He did not trouble Himself as to the way in which these had been quickened in their hearts. It would have been well if the Church had followed a like method. But too often she has demanded to know the road by which men and women have come to the Kingdom of God. We might as well ask the child for proof of his birth. His presence in the family suffices. Faith in Christ ought to be enough for the Church. She has no right to ask about its genesis. But she *has* done this and demanded proof of conversion—the process—rather than, as she should have done, of faith, which is the result of the process. And in many sections of the Church there is a feeling that there is an ideal experience through which all must pass.

Here lies one of the perils of religious biography, in which the inner processes of the soul are laid bare. Many read such books as the *Confessions of Augustine*, or Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, and they say to themselves: 'I have never had an experience like to these. I have never known the agony, the strong crying, and tears depicted here. These are strange to me. Can I be a child of God never having known these?' And so they are troubled and distressed. To have such experiences we must have had natures like to these men; we must have wandered far like the prodigal, or we could never have the long journey to travel back again to home and father. Our experience will be regulated by our nature and the course we have taken. If, by God's great mercy, we have been kept at home, surrounded by loving Christian influence, we may pass into the Kingdom almost without knowing it; but if we have wandered far, there must be the bitter, weary journey back to our true home. We need not trouble about the way. If we are in the home, with love in our heart to the Father—a love that leads us to obey His word—then, no matter how, we *are* part of the household of God.

2. But with all the diversity there is in the household of God real unity. In what does it consist?

(1) In *loyalty* to the Head of the house. All are members of a household who are loyal. The children may have different conceptions of the head of the family; they may regard him in different ways; but if they be loyal, loving, they are a real part of the household. Within this limit there is room for almost endless diversity. One child may understand one part of his father's character, and another may understand another part. One may appreciate his intellectual qualities, and another his practical ability. But all who belong to the household look up to and trust him as the head.

So it is in the household of God. One mind may be compelled by its very nature to grapple with the problems of the Divine Nature; another may be able to believe without attempting to prove. One may need definitions and theories, another may quietly rest in the Lord. One may be careful and troubled about many things, like Martha; another, like Mary, may sit at Jesus' feet. But the central, essential thing is to be loyal to the Head. If the heart be fixed on Christ, the visible Head of the household, then he belongs thereto. The porter at the door has no right to ask any question but this: 'Dost thou believe in the Son of God?' If the question be answered in the affirmative the door must open to the great house of God.

(2) From loyalty flows *obedience*. For obedience is loyalty in action. Works are the fruit of faith. 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' The most obedient is the most loyal child. But then obedience in a household is not like obedience in the army or in commerce. The home is not the realm of law, but of love; it is not studded over with commands, but is filled with the atmosphere of affection. The slave, the servant, just takes and obeys the commands that are given, in the letter. Circumstances may change and render the commands inappropriate, but still he obeys. The child obeys in a different manner. He takes not the

letter of the commands, but the spirit. He adapts the command to circumstances. He asks: What would my father wish to be done under the circumstances? He will thus often disobey the letter in order to keep the spirit. He will alter the command to suit the occasion. His supreme desire will be to do the Father's will. 'The servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth,' or would do under the circumstances, but the son claims to know this and to act upon his knowledge. And thus loyalty leads to obedience, not to the letter, but to the spirit of commands—obedience to a Spirit bearing witness within, not to a code of law. This is the way love always works.

(3) And from obedience to the Head flows *mutual consideration and service.* The true conception of a household is of a company in which the resources of each of the members are at the service of all the rest; so that 'whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.' It should be a ministering company. The joy of one should be the joy of all, the sorrow of one the sorrow of all. It should be a company in which the strong bear the infirmities of the weak; those on the hill-top of faith moving down to those in the valley of doubt, and leading them to the height of vision; the glad and merry bearing some of the sunshine of their nature to the morbid and gloomy; the strength of the young being put at the service of the feeble, and the wisdom of the old being made to guide the young; those who have this world's goods counting themselves stewards, and distributing to those who need.[1]

Ask God to give thee skill
In comfort's art,
That thou mayest consecrated be,
And set apart
Unto a life of sympathy!
For heavy is the weight of ill
In every heart;
And comforters are needed much
Of Christ-like touch.

[1] W. G. Horder.

Christ the Cornerstone.

Eph. ii. 20.—'Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.'

A BEAUTIFUL tradition is handed down to us from the building of Solomon's temple concerning the stone rejected by the builders. Down from the mountains it was brought by the straining oxen, but no place could be found for it in the rising walls. After repeated attempts to dispose of it, it was rolled aside, where it was soon covered by moss and weeds. As the building neared completion a special stone was needed to knit together the two walls at the corner. This need reminded builders of the stone which had been rejected. The moss and weeds were brushed aside. The stone was carried to the place where it was needed, and though of peculiar shape it exactly fitted the place where it was wanted. Thus the stone that was rejected by the builders became the headstone of the corner. Though once despised and rejected, it was given a place of usefulness and beauty. Our Saviour applied this tradition to Himself, and showed that though at first He was despised and rejected of men, by and by He should occupy a place of pre-eminence.

1. Christ is the 'headstone of the corner' *in Christian revelation.* He is the centre and theme of the Bible. The types and ceremonies point to Him. To Him give all the prophets witness. Jesus in His person and work, in His mission and various offices, in His first and second advent, is the heart and life of the Book. As in Italy all roads lead to Rome, so in the Bible all paths lead to Christ. In Him alone do all its voices blend. In Him alone are all its prophecies fulfilled. He who reads intelligently may see Christ upon every page of the Book. It is pre-eminently the biography of a person, and that person is the Lord Jesus. Many have not understood the Book because they have not put Christ in His place. Man cannot understand the Bible until Christ is given His place.

2. Jesus is the 'headstone of the corner' *in the Church.* For it He died. By Him it was founded. It is the pillar and ground of the truth. The Church is the exponent of Christianity, which is pre-eminently the religion of a person. Take away Christ, and Christianity must decline and die, and the Church must crumble to ruins. Jesus Christ is the glory of the Church. He is the theme of her sermons, the object of her worship. To Him we offer prayer. To Him we sing our songs of praise. He is the pattern after which the lives of its members are fashioned. He is the inspiration of their ideals. The mission of the Church is to lift up Jesus Christ and to draw all men unto Him. Take away Christ, and you remove every reason for the Church's existence. He shall be the glory of the temple above, of which the Church on earth is but a type.

3. Jesus is the 'headstone of the corner' *in civilization.* That there were civilizations before the dawn of the Christian era cannot be denied. These civilizations existed for kings and princes; for the rich and the great. But the civilization of Christ is for the peasant as well as the king; for the subject as well as the prince; for the illiterate as well as the learned; for the slave as well as the master. The civilization of which Christ was the Founder is far superior to that of any previous age of the world. If you would see the monument to Sir Christopher Wren in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, you have only to look around you. If you would see the monument which the world has erected to Christ all you have to do is to look about you. Civilization is one monument erected in his honour. The great inventions of our age, the hospitals and almshouses and educational institutions and the great reforms of our age are also monuments erected to His memory. They are marks of the progress of the Christ-spirit in the world, and are also present-day evidences of Christianity.

4. Jesus is the 'headstone of the corner' *in art and literature.* He never wrote a book, but He has been the theme of more books than any other character of history. He never composed a song, but He has been the hero of more songs than any other person. He never painted a picture, but there are more pictures of the Christ than of any other of the world's great men. In the world of art He is pre-eminent. Without Him we could not have had Murillo's 'Assumption of The Virgin,' or Ruben's 'Descent from the Cross,' or Da Vinci's 'Last Supper,' or Angelo's 'Last Judgment,' or Raphael's 'Sistine Madonna.' Without Christ we could never have had Handel's 'Messiah' or any of the great masterpieces of music. Milton and Shakespeare; Tennyson and Longfellow; George MacDonald and many others kindled their flames at the fire of Christianity. Blot out the Christ, and you destroy the great oratorios, the masterpieces of art and the world's best literature. It was He and He alone who made all these possible.

5. Jesus is the 'headstone of the corner' *in the believer's affections.* Not a few can say that He is the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. Upon love He founded His empire, and thousands have died for Him. The devotion of the saints upon earth is not inferior to that of the martyrs. No sacrifice is too great for His followers, no burden too heavy and no journey too long. Houses and lands, parents and friends are given up for the sake of the Master. For Him they suffer the scorn and contempt of men. For His Name's sake they leave their homes, their country and their kindred that they may carry His gospel to the ends of the earth. For His sake they go into the worst places of the earth —to icy Greenland, to darkest Africa; to the leper quarters of China and to 'The Dead Man's Land' of South America. Were it necessary, to the gibbet and the stake they would go, that they might testify of Him.

6. Jesus shall be the 'headstone of the corner' *in a larger sense than He is to-day.* In His march through the ages Jesus has swept before Him slavery, oppression and corruption of every kind. Other evils shall yet disappear.

From the beginning of Genesis until the end of the Revelation we hear the promise and shout of victory. And one day that prophecy shall be fulfilled, that at 'the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' [1]

O Father, haste the promised hour
When at His feet shall lie
All rule, authority, and power
Beneath the ample sky,
When He shall reign from pole to pole,
The Lord of every human soul;

When all shall heed the words He said
Amid their daily cares,
And by the loving life He led
Shall seek to pattern theirs,
And He who conquered death shall win
The nobler conquest over sin.[2]

God's Dwelling-place

Eph. ii. 22.—'An habitation of God.'

This is perhaps the highest ideal and figure of the Christian life with which the Word of God furnishes us. Each redeemed one is to become a very dwelling-place of the most High. Into the weakest life He who is almighty strength deigns to come; in the life whose failures are most obvious He who is perfect Holiness deigns to dwell. And it is this fact —the life of God in the soul of man—which saves from the power of sin, actually translating all the conceivable possibilities of Christ's riches into indubitable realities of experience.

The implication of such a word as this is an exhortation to the cultivation of fitness. If God is to dwell in my life, I must make the dwelling-place, as far as in me lies, worthy of the Divine Occupant. There are renunciations and displacements which must be effected if the home is to be worthy of the Guest; and in respect of these, each energy of the soul is reinforced by the Holy Spirit. His mighty co-operation with every sincerity of purpose alone makes it possible to 'cleanse every filthiness of flesh and spirit,' and to 'perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.' What a sanctifying awe does this sense of God's indwelling bring into life! It is at once a controlling restraint and constraint, the explanation of every activity and the inspiration of every obedience. And every indwelt life is a prophecy of the eternal glory that is laid up for the children of God, when, in the great temple of redeemed humanity of which each is a living stone, He shall dwell throughout Eternity.[1]

The soul wherein God dwells,—
What church could holier be?—
Becomes a walking tent
Of heavenly majesty.

How far from here to Heaven?
Not very far, my friend;
A single hearty step
Will all thy journey end.

Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born
If He's not born in thee,
Thy soul is still forlorn.

The cross on Golgotha
Will never save thy soul,
The cross in thine own heart
Alone can make thee whole.

Hold there! where runnest thou?
Know Heaven is in thee.
Seek'st thou for God elsewhere
His face thou'lt never see.

O would thy heart but be
A manger for His birth;
God would once more become
A child upon the earth.

[1] G. S. Huey.
[2] W. C. Bryant.

[1] J. S. Holden, *Chapter by Chapter*, iv. 210.

Go out, God will go in,
Die thou and let Him live.
Be not—and He will be,
Wait and He'll all things give.[1]

The Message for the Gentiles.

Eph. iii. 3, 6.—'By revelation was made known unto me the mystery . . . that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.'

1. At the beginning of their ministry, even after they had received the Holy Ghost, it never occurred to the Apostles that they had a message for the Gentiles. They would no more have baptized a Gentile than one would baptize a dog. It required the special preparation of the vision on the housetop at Joppa before Peter was ready to go with the messengers of Cornelius to preach Christ to him. He explained it so to Cornelius: 'God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.' And it required the special outpouring of the Holy Ghost on these Gentiles for Peter to say, 'Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?' Peter had to defend his action before the Church at Jerusalem. The charge was, 'Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised.' When he rehearsed the matter, and told of the descent of the Holy Ghost, the opponents held their peace and glorified God, saying, 'Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.' But even so, and in spite of this, we know how the work of evangelizing the Gentiles was hampered and hindered by the Judaizing party in the Early Church. Look at the mischief they wrought in Galatia, where St. Paul had planted a flourishing Church. These troublesome fanatics followed him and said, 'Did he circumcise you?' And when they pointed out how God commanded circumcision, how God's Son Himself was circumcised, how God had declared 'the soul that is not circumcised shall be cut off, he hath broken my covenant', Paul's answer was, 'In your baptism you have been made part of the Body of Christ, who was circumcised,' and 'Ye are complete in him,' 'in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.' 'For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.' 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.' 'And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'

2. Do we appreciate this grace to-day? Do we consider what it would mean if it were said to us Gentiles, 'There is no message for you; Christ did not die for you. Be as happy as you can in this world, for you have no other. Eternal life through Jesus Christ is not for you.' That was the attitude taken by the Apostolic Church until God made known the mystery 'which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.'

Or is it enough for us to enjoy this blessing for ourselves? Our Lord, in His commission to the Apostles, after His Resurrection, very plainly commanded them to evangelize the Gentiles, 'Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' Surely we may reverently think that to the all-seeing prophetic eye of Christ the field of the world was ripe already to harvest, and the little grain of mustard-seed had become the great tree of the Church, and the Holy Spirit had germinated the heavenly seed sown in men's hearts in the virgin soil of the heathen world; and arrayed before Him, as in Van Eyck's picture of the Adoration of the Lamb, stood the company of Saints and Martyrs—the 'multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, clothed with white

[1] Johannes Scheffler.

robes and palms in their hands, worshipping God and saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.'

¶ At a country village in England a number of persons had congregated in a small place of worship, to attend a meeting. The chapel was full to overflowing, and many persons who were anxious to hear were obliged to remain outside; these crowded around the open doors and windows. After reading, singing, and prayer, a speaker commenced addressing the meeting. He had not proceeded far when a voice was heard from without: 'Speak louder, we can not hear; remember those outside.' Those words at once furnished a good motto for the meeting. It was indeed the very object for which the assembly had congregated, to stir up one another to 'remember those outside'; those who were outside the church, at a distance from the means of grace —those who knew nothing of God and the salvation of Jesus Christ.[1]

The Epiphany an Intuition.

Eph. iii. 4, 5.—'The mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men.'

EPIPHANY is the season of illumination, and illumination comes by swift and sudden intuition. That is the peculiar way in which the human mind catches on to new knowledge.

We know how the poetic instinct of old painters laid hold of the visit of the Wise Men to Bethlehem, and magnified this arrival of a tiny group from the East into an immense impulse which set the whole world in motion towards the manger at Bethlehem. It was their way of expressing by symbolic presentation in artistic imagination that which the actual story typified. The coming of the wise men at the sign of the Star was an intuitional omen which signalled the ultimate significance for all nations of that which had been born of Mary amid the hay. Little, indeed, those Chaldean strangers knew of what they were about or of all that was to follow. But their action comes as the sudden pledge of what mankind at large must inevitably become aware of. And the artist's fancy, therefore, might picture all nations from every corner of the earth thronging in crowds behind the men who lead them as their kings. By one inspiration they have all set out at once—nobles and knights, squires and youths, with horses and hawks, on camels, and on mules, with the bravery of banners, with flags flying over silken tents, all pouring along, bearing their golden treasuries to lay them down at the feet of the wondering mother with the Babe. So Fra Lippo Lippi pictures them characteristically in our own National Gallery, as they crowd along through a mountain ravine, winding endlessly, with endless faces still pressing in, as the ravine hides from sight the throngs still felt to be behind. Mere imagination, of course; but an imagination which seizes on the significance of Epiphany, on the significance of a burst of light in which, for a brief moment, everything hidden in darkness starts out into clear vision.

Of course century after century will drag out its weary length in toil and pain, in blindness and in blood, before the kings of the whole earth will indeed set forth in all their wealth and pomp, in the glittering glory of their gallant companies, with the entire body of their desires and pleasures, moving down towards the stable at Bethlehem. But Epiphany has flashed the news that such an issue has now become finally inevitable. Epiphany has felt the pulse of that uttermost hour, giving one throb, as it were, along the veins of humanity. Epiphany has foretold, has accepted, the prophetic intimation. What has been once so apprehended as a truth from God to man can never return to God empty. The vision passes, but it does not fail. It has set the standard below which man's hope can never now fall, it has touched the goal towards which we travel. There is but one meaning now by which to measure all human wealth, all human royalty; there is but one event round which all human history will for ever turn—Christ in us, 'the hope of glory.'

[1] A. B. Webber.

1. We learn, then, by intuitional illumination. That is the mode in which the reality of things lays hold of us; that is the way in which God reveals Himself. So Epiphany proclaims. But this does not mean, of course, that the illumination is independent of reasoning, is a mystic action out of all relation to thought. On the contrary, it enters in response to long processes of thought which have preceded it, and it originates again in long processes of thought which it evokes for its own verification; and both these are essential to it. First, hard and close reasoning, accurate and intelligent study—these have been for long years spent with loyal generosity by the Jewish schools in unravelling and defining the purposes of God which were fulfilled by the birth of the Word made Flesh. Whole worlds of speculation on life, on man, on the Spirit of God, on human experience, were swept together into that consummation. Jesus is born in answer to the demands of man's intelligence, to the logical pressure of man's conscience, to the premises that have been hammered out by man's thought. Though the answer itself, going as it does far beyond what reason has been able to detect or determine beforehand, is received as an instantaneous illumination from on high, yet it is only intelligible in view of the intellectual anxieties which it solves. It enters to meet and to lead and to carry forward the lines on which reason has been busily at work. Only by loyalty to the dictates and necessities of his thought is man in a condition to apprehend the good news flashed back to him.

2. And so, again, when the illumination has been received, far from flinging defiance at the reason which it has, as it were, left behind for the moment, it has now to submit itself to the endless process by which reason discovers its adequate verification. It now becomes itself the starting point of every new intellectual analysis and deduction. It is the fulcrum round which mental activity works. Man's thought is kindled by it and discovers fresh opportunities for itself in the experience given it. Its range is widened; its grasp over facts is fortified and confirmed. This is the way in which intuition justifies itself as a reasonable, intelligible act.

3. But this is the time of Epiphany, the hour of intuition. Truth always comes in those mystical and abrupt intimations which are even now astir. Still, to some rare student there can come the moment when he lifts his head from weary books to find a star—new, solemn and alive—shining in the face of him. Still he can become swiftly aware that all paths of serious study lead at last to Jesus. Still a conviction may smite in upon us, amid all the hubbub of the ordinary religious activities, while we hear, as it were audibly, the voice of God in our ears pronouncing, as at the baptism by Jordan, 'This is my beloved Son: hear him.' Still in the heart of some purely human gladness we may suddenly awake to the presence by our side of the Lord of all joy, at whose word long ago at the Cana wedding the water trembled into wine. Still, most certainly, the old secret wakes again with new power, as, in face of all the hideous leprosies of our social state, the calm assurance once again meets us from the lips of Him who is saying in response to man's woeful cry for help, 'I will, be thou clean.' The mystery is yet at work below—this mystery of the Gentiles. There are hidden things yet to be disclosed; there are secrets now in the act of being revealed. It is ours to enter into the fellowship of this undying mystery.

Can we not hear, can we not feel even now, the mystery at work in the dark? There is a dull, cheerless hour that heralds always the breaking of the dawn. So, too, in the spirit this chill hour that is now on us may but foretell what is imminent in those silent places where 'God makes Himself an awful rose of dawn.' Are there not signs already abroad, stirrings that can be felt of a new day?

Amid all that disfigures and disheartens our Christian civilization, is there not still, for our comfort, the motion of a new pity, a new justice, a new brotherhood which shakes our souls as with a passing breath of inspiration? Do we not recognize the throb of a splendid

passion that may yet draw men together into a society that more faithfully images the love of God for man, and of man for man in Christ Jesus?

These things are happening. Prophecies are going before, cries pass in the night, the light will yet break. Lay yourselves open to it, that you may still feel

> Through all your earthly dress
> Bright shoots of everlastingness,

and leave the comprehension to follow. If the voices call, rise and go after them.[1]

> Though they be soft and low,
> Stealing whence we cannot know,
> Painfully heard and easily forgot,
> Turn not, oh! turn not thou,
> But listen, listen, listen!
> If haply be heard it may.
> Listen, listen, listen!
> Is it not sounding now?

The Preacher and his Theme.

Eph. iii. 8.—'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given'—there we have the preacher. 'The unsearchable riches of Christ'—there we have the preacher's theme. Let us take the latter first.

1. *The Theme.*—'The unsearchable riches of Christ'; it is as though a miner, working away at the primary vein of ore, were continually surprised by other veins of equally precious ore, stretching out on every side and overwhelming him in rich embarrassment. 'The unsearchable riches'; it is as though a little child, gathering the sweet, clean heather by the pathside, were suddenly to lift her eyes and catch the purple glory of a boundless moor. 'The unsearchable riches of Christ'; it is as though a man were to set out to track the confines of a lake, to walk its boundaries, and, when he thought the circuit was almost completed, he were to discover it was not a lake at all, but an arm of the ocean, and he stood confronted by the immeasurable sea. 'The unsearchable riches of Christ'—the sense of amazement at the wealth of the evangel was never absent from the Apostle's life and writings.

To the Apostle Paul these unsearchable riches of Christ are not merely subjects of contemplation, they are objects of appropriation. This ideal wealth he finds in Christ is usable glory, usable for the enrichment of the common life. The unsearchable riches he contemplates fit themselves into every kind of human poverty and of human need. He stands before sin, and proclaims it can be destroyed; he goes among all the broken and perverted relationships of human life, and claims and proclaims that they can all be rectified; and all this in the strength of the unsearchable riches of Christ. To this man all the wealth he contemplates is realizable, usable, and can be applied to the satisfying of the deepest needs of the race.

(1) The Apostle Paul stands before sin, and claims it can be destroyed. It is not that he proclaims a kind of general amnesty, or the general ministry of pardon and the general removal of sin; the Apostle Paul delighted to specialize, and probably his most welcome specializing was when he brought the unsearchable riches of Christ into contact with the deepest and most debasing needs of men. If we want to know the confidence of this man, and how and with what mighty assurance he rang out the evangel, let us turn to some of those Epistles where he gives us a kind of catalogue, a long and gloomy list, of the needs and of the depravities to which he loves to bring the unsearchable riches of Christ. Here is one of the lists: 'Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with men, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners.' These were but types of the foul issues around which and amid which the saving energies of grace were to be brought. How quietly and triumphantly the

[1] H. Scott Holland.

Apostle says, after giving this almost appalling list, 'and such were some of you'; and then with equal quietness, but with a glow of triumph, he continues, 'but ye were washed,' and when the Apostle Paul uses the word 'washed', it is a word of most searching and most pregnant significance. When Paul speaks of washing it is not merely the washing out of a stain, it is the washing out of an affection; it is not merely the removal of a pimple, it is the purification of the blood; it is not merely the removal of guilt, it is the very purging and refining of desire; it is not the mere cleansing of a branch; it is the eradication of a root. Yes, after giving such a list of appalling depravities, he says with triumphant confidence that men of this type and this need can be washed, cleansed, can even now be made to wear the white robe and the royal crown.

¶ I sometimes think when I read Wesley's sermons, and when I read John Wesley's Journal, as though he took a positive delight in presenting to men long catalogues of their depravities. Sometimes his sermons are just filled with depressing and most appalling gloom, but the depravities are only catalogued in order that he then might exult in the energies of redeeming grace. Here is an extract from his Journal: 'To-day I preached at Bath. Some of the rich and the great were present, to whom, as to the rest, I declared, with all plainness of speech, first, that by nature they were all children of wrath; second, that all their natural tempers were corrupt and abominable. And one of my hearers, my Lord — stayed very impatiently till I came to the middle of my fourth head, and then, standing up, he said, ''Tis hot! 'tis very hot!' and he got downstairs as fast as he could.' Ah, but my Lord — did not know John Wesley, my Lord — should have stayed a little longer. For whenever John Wesley began to poignantly analyse the depravity of the human heart, it was always and everywhere only the preface and the prelude to the unveiling of the unsearchable riches of Christ. If my Lord — had only stayed a few minutes longer, John Wesley would have come to the very marrow of his evangel; for even on this very day in Bath his text was this—'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.' He only piled up the need, that he then might the more exultantly triumph in the remedy.

(2) What else does the Apostle find? He not only confronts sin with confidence, but he stands amid the misunderstandings of men, amid the perversions of the proposed order, the ugly twists that have been given to relationships and fellowships that were purposed to be beautiful and true, and he proclaims their possible rectification in Christ. Whenever Paul wants to bring correcting and enriching energies into human life, he finds them in the unsearchable riches of Christ. He finds the ore for all ethical and social enrichments in this vast spiritual deposit. He goes into the home and seeks to readjust the relationships of the household, and enrich and heighten even the wedding now. How does he do it? He does it by bringing Calvary's tree to the very hearthstone, by bringing the merits of the sacrifice of Christ into the relationships of wedded life. 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.' He goes into the domain of labour, and seeks to justify the relationships between employers and servants. How? By seeking to bring both master and worker into a common communion with the wealth of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Again and again, in the Epistles, he goes into our common intimacies, our familiar contacts, the places where we touch and elbow one another in common life, and he seeks to convert the touch which conveys an ill-contagion into a touch that is the vehicle of consecrated health. How does he do it? By bringing the unsearchable riches into the common thing. Why, he even asks us to determine our diet by Calvary—'Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died' . . . He is always among the riches, for he is wanting to enrich every kind of relationship, and he finds in the unsearchable riches of Christ the energy he needs.

2. *The Preacher.* — Turn now to the preacher: 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints.' Then the preacher is possessed by a sense of profound humility. 'Unto me'—the standing amazement of it, that he should have been chosen, first to share the wealth, to claim the inheritance, and then to make known his discovery to others. 'Unto me, who am less than the least'—he violates grammar. It is not enough for Paul to obtain a word which signifies the least, he wants a place beneath the least—'unto me, who am less than the least'—such a word does he require in order to express his sense of his own unworthiness. 'Less than the least.' Surely the preacher must sometimes lay down his pen and pause in the very middle of his preparation in a sense of extreme wonderment that the condescending Lord should have chosen him to be the vehicle and messenger of eternal grace. The man who feels unworthy will be kept open and receptive toward the fountain.

'Why did Jesus choose Judas?' said an inquirer once to Dr. Parker. 'I don't know,' replied the Doctor, 'but I have a bigger mystery still. I cannot make out why He chose me.'

A man who enters through the door of Divine vocation into the ministry will surely apprehend 'the glory' of his calling. He will be constantly wondering, and his wonder will be a moral antiseptic, that *he* has been appointed a servant in the treasuries of grace, to make known 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' We cannot get away from that wonder in the life of the Apostle Paul. Next to the infinite love of his Saviour, and the amazing glory of his own salvation, his wonder is arrested and nourished by the surpassing glory of his own vocation. His 'calling' is never lost in the medley of professions. The light of privilege is always shining in the way of duty. His work never loses its halo, and his road never becomes entirely commonplace and grey. He seems to catch his breath every time he thinks of his mission, and in the midst of abounding adversity glory still more abounds. That abiding wonder was part of the Apostle's apostolic equipment, and his sense of the glory of his calling enriched his proclamation of the glories of redeeming grace. If we lose the sense of the wonder of our commission we shall become like common traders in a common market, babbling about common wares.

¶ 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given.' I wish I could just read that in the very tone and accent in which I think the Apostle himself would have proclaimed it. I think the early part of it would have to be read almost tremblingly. Mark the mingling of profound humility with the tone of absolute confidence. When the Apostle looked at himself he was filled with shrinkings and timidities, but when he thought about his acceptance and his endowment he was possessed by confident triumph. Whatever shrinking he had about himself he had no shrinking that he was the elect of God, endowed with the grace of God, in order to proclaim the evangel of God. It was just because he was so perfectly assured of his acceptance and of his vocation that he felt so perfectly unworthy. Did not Cromwell say of George Fox that an enormous sacred self-confidence was not the least of his attainments? I am not quite sure that Oliver Cromwell correctly interpreted George Fox. I would be inclined to withdraw the word 'self' and insert the word 'God,' and then we have got, not only what George Fox ought to be, but what the Apostle Paul was, and what every minister of the Gospel is expected to be, in Christ; we are expected to be the children of an enormous God-confidence, we are to be children absolutely assured that we are in communion with Christ, and are even now receptive of His grace.[1]

Our Missionary Obligation.

Eph. iii. 8.—'To preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

Do you believe that there is such a thing in existence as the unsearchable riches of Christ?

[1] J. H. Jowett.

Think of the phrase, and of its connotation. The point is not the virtues of a higher culture, the diffusion of a better ethical ideal, the uplift of society, the conciliation of races. It is the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Is there such a Person, is there such a fact, as the Christ, the Messiah, the Hope of Israel, the Hope of Man, the Promise whose coming shone far off till Himself, the Fulfilment, was revealed, to live, to die, to live again? Is it a structural, a central thing in human history that some nineteen ages ago there moved before human eyes, there spoke in human ears, and made a lodgment of Himself infinitely deep in human spirits, a Personage altogether unique, commonly known as Jesus Christ our Lord? Is it fact that the artless records of His life, death, character, mind, self, of His words and works, His love, joy, sorrow, victory, have moved man over a width, and far more than that, into an unfathomed depth, to which it is idle and trivial to compare any other personal influence whatever? Is it no more than reason to say that not even the best first Christians were in the least capable of inventing and creating the picture of this Personage; in short, that to imagine a Jesus Christ, a Jesus Christ must be invoked? Is it certain, except to an arbitrary hypercriticism, that within His own generation He was at once and equally the well-known member of a Galilean home, a man familiarly remembered, and also the Conqueror of death, the Prince of immortality, the Life of men, the Everlasting Son of God? Is it certain, and on ample evidence, that these amazing concurrent persuasions—the persuasions that the carpenter of Nazareth was indeed biographically human, and was also the King of Heaven, the second Man, the Incarnate God—were, to those who held them, not monstrous and maddening tyrants of the mind, but a power which is altogether for soberness, and purity, and wisdom, and a large heart, and a constructive force, and a hallowing hope? Is it morally certain, therefore, that those beliefs rose not from the region of delusions and frenzies, but descended from the sphere of transcendent and serene reality? Is it certain that this Christ overcame death in His whole being? Is any other account to be reasonably given of the existence of any temple for the worship of His victorious Name? Are these things to our highest reason—that is, to our whole selves brought to bear on the apprehension of them—certainties?

Then, is it too much to say of this Jesus Christ our Lord, that if He is anything whatever worth naming He is immeasurably much, not for a man here and there, or a race here and there, but for man? For man made in God's image, man the great mystery, man the great ruin, man the sinner, the burden-bearer, the mourner—man in his difficult life, on his dying bed, by the sad grave of his beloved—this Jesus Christ is, for us men and for our salvation, unsearchable riches.

But if so, have we any right to withhold man's unsearchable riches from the clasp of his needy hands, from the fruition of his famished while immortal soul?

Answer, you that have any knowledge, even the least, of this Lord Jesus Christ for yourselves. Answer, you that have found in Him Incarnate your one credible and satisfying vision of the face of God; you that have found in Him sacrificed your one and your most wonderful peace of soul before the eternal Judge; you that have found in His 'It is I' an answer to your doubts deeper and more final than all the philosophies; you that have found in His unspeakable Companionship the power to meet all temptations and to endure, aye, to give thanks underneath, all sorrows. Answer, from the depth of hearts which, knowing Christ as sincerely as you know yourselves, know that which the unknown can never shake. Say to yourselves, and say to others in any way you can, that we must not, we dare not, refuse to carry to the nations the unsearchable riches of this Lord Jesus Christ.

> Shall we to man benighted
> This Lamp of Life deny?

No, it cannot be. We will first give God thanks afresh for His gift unspeakable, His wealth unsearchable. And then we will see that, as far as in us lies, that wonderful Name

shall be known on earth, that saving Health among all the nations.[1]

¶ When Professor Elmslie lay dying he said to his wife, 'No man can deny that I have always preached the Love of God.' And again later, 'Kate, God is Love. Kate, we must tell everybody that, but especially our own boy—at least you will—we must tell everybody.' That is the vocation of every disciple of Jesus Christ.[2]

Christ's Wealth.

Eph. iii. 8.—'The unsearchable riches of Christ.'

In a letter, which is to be read in the classical Cardiphonia collection, John Newton tells Thomas Scott this story. A much valued ministerial friend of his for many years after his ordination was a complete rationalist toward all Divine things. But one day as he was reading his Greek Testament he came on the Greek word which is rendered 'unsearchable' in the third chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. And immediately his thoughts were powerfully arrested by that wonderful expression of the Apostle. And as he reflected over that wonderful expression he said to himself that Paul employs some very wonderful words in all this wonderful chapter. He speaks, for instance, of what are to him, 'unsearchable riches' where I find nothing unsearchable at all. He speaks also of heights and depths and lengths and breadths where I find everything plain and simple and easy. Now, what can such a man as the Apostle possibly mean by all these so strong and so unparalleled expressions? And that reflection led Newton's friend to a searching examination of the whole of Paul's Epistles—an examination that ended in a total change both of his personal religion and of all his ministerial work, pulpit and pastoral. The whole story is told in Newton's Seventh Letter to Scott, and after another letter of the same kind Newton had the happiness of seeing Scott taking his stand beside himself as a spiritually-minded and an evangelical minister of the Pauline Gospel.[1]

And now, arrested ourselves by that same wonderful expression, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ,' let us give ourselves up to the consideration of Jesus Christ in the matter of His unsearchable riches.

1. There is wealth unfathomable in Christ. That means *Divinity*. Unless we believe in that, He has—for all the beauty and sweetness, for all the harmony and graciousness, for all the bounteousness and goodness of His nature—He has His limits and boundaries like the rest of us. True, they may be much further away than ours are; His nature measured against ours may be like some broad ocean against a little puddle on the pavement; but still, unless we admit and accept completely the thought of the true Divinity of Jesus Christ, and that in Him dwells the whole affluence of the Godhead, the words of our text may be words of rapturous admiration, justifiable on the ground of lofty emotion, but they are not the words of truth and soberness. And so, when we speak of His riches, we mean that the opulence of the Divine and independent Being, the wealth of His wisdom, the riches of His power, and righteousness, and beauty, and joy, and self-sufficingness are all treasured in Him, concerning whom it was said of old, 'He was the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'

As the famous Puritan aphorism has it, *aliquid in Christo formosius salvatore*. That is to say, there are far more riches in Christ when He is simply taken by Himself than there is in His being our Saviour. For, long before He became our Saviour, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. Which unsearchable revelation in John's Gospel, when taken along with God's unsearchable revelation of His Divine Son in Paul, shows us something of what God's Son was before He became our

[1] H. C. G. Moule, *Cathedral and University and Other Sermons*, 85.
[2] W. Rose.

[1] A. Whyte, *The Spiritual Life*, 35.

Saviour. Yes; there are unsearchable riches in the Divine Sonship of Christ past all finding out even by those who have been enabled to see deepest into the Divine mystery of Jesus Christ.

2. This wealth is available for our use. That means *Incarnation*. The incarnation of Jesus Christ, the coming into humanity of the manifestation of God in the flesh, is the one means whereby this fullness of Divine power, and beauty, and righteousness can be communicated to man. Just as those mutineers who set out in the eighteenth century for that island in the Pacific might have been visited some time by a ship from far across the sea, bearing to their poverty rich treasures that they could not otherwise have, so to us rebels, —foolish mutineers and runaways from God— islanded in this little earth in the great seas of space and time, there comes across the waters the richly-laden bark; and in the manhood of Jesus Christ we have the full sum of the powers of God. In the manhood of Jesus Christ Deity has touched humanity, and the pauper has been enriched. By the incarnation of Christ we have this wealth, by His mighty and mysterious act of self-abnegation He touches the lowest depth of creature humiliation, and enters into that most bitter of all earthly experiences—the Cross—as a means by which His largest riches are bestowed upon us. Without the Cross we should not have known the depth of that love which to know is life eternal; without it there would not have come to us the free forgiveness without which no riches are possible for us; without it—by a mysterious necessity which we can but partly trace—without it that living, Divine righteousness were barred from accepting and forgiving sinful men. But Christ has died, and that death is the history of the earthen vessel, which some poor labourer working in the field may dig up, and by a blow from his pickaxe shatter the earthen vessel that the rich treasure may be revealed. It is as the broken box of alabaster ointment, very precious, that may be poured on our heads, and so fragrance diffuse. Christ sent us His riches as His dying gift; Christ's incarnation culminates in Christ's death on the cross for the sins of the whole world, as the means whereby the unsearchable riches of Christ are given to us sinners.

3. Our part is the appropriation, which means *Faith*. Faith, or simple trust in Him, is the door which we open that Christ may come in; and every man's faith, however imperfect it may be, is like the opening of the bud to the sunshine that the sunshine may enter. When I dilate my lungs, the air comes in; when I open my eyes, the light comes in; when I open my heart, Christ comes in. When I desire He answers, when I trust He gives, when I lay my hand on Him He fills it with blessing. He stands at the door of our heart, and says: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.' Let us answer, 'Come in, thou Blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?' and He will come, with all His love and wealth, and cast it down before us. And as a wife has a right to her husband's riches, our poor soul will be endowed and vested with the unsearchable wealth of Christ.

These riches, which Christ will give us, if we will only take them, are inseparable from ourselves. They consist of things that become part of our being, and so can never be wrenched away from us; there is no fear of loss, of outward violence as from force or fraud; they last, and we know there is no possibility of their being taken away. The more a man makes in this world, the more trouble he is at to know what to do with it; but here is wealth that cannot be parted from us, and so brings with it no anxiety; and he that has invested in that safe security fulfils the ideal, the noble ideal, of one of the heathen poets:—

> Whose soul is free from slavish bands,
> Of hope to rise or fear to fall;
> More than himself no mortal hands
> Can have,—in nothing yet have all.

¶ The meaning of this 'wealth' can only be understood if it is borne in mind what man, in the material order, dreads in poverty and what he seeks in wealth. He does not shrink

from poverty only because it means toil and scanty food and crowded dwellings. From these things he would gladly escape, but the sting of poverty lies in the insecurity which it brings. Poverty spells a lack of reserves in a world where there is nothing certain for the morrow. The man has nothing over with which to meet some new demand. He is condemned to live on the margin, and in times of trouble he is helpless. A life precious to him might be saved in the hour of sickness if only he had some reserved power; his boy might be started in life upon some career with hope in it, and because there is nothing over that way is closed. The bitterness of poverty is in the limitations within which it confines the poor man. In the presence of his adversaries he is without resource.

The sting of spiritual poverty also is in the insecurity which it brings. The human spirit is poor when it knows itself to be unequal to fresh demands which may come at any time. At the moment it is able simply to hold its own, and barely that. But the spiritual situation may be entirely different to-morrow: 'If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how shalt thou contend with horses?' How, then, will the poverty-stricken soul fare? There will be a call for clearness of vision, courage of purpose, an unwearied love, and these are wanting. This is the sting of poverty, when it is found in the soul—the dread of the morrow, when it will meet new claims, and have no reserves. Through sunny days it may have enough, but nothing more; but what will it do when the storms break from that unclouded sky?

Wealth of soul, therefore, must mean freedom from all such terrors. Wealth is power stored against the evil day. A man in his spiritual life is offered a faith which will link him so intimately with the Lord of Power and wealth that as his day so shall his strength be. His Lord is rich, and he is one with his Lord; and since this hidden wealth is his to claim he can be free from too much anxiety concerning the morrow. That is the temper of the happy servants of God. They are living not on a capital which is slowly growing less, but they are drawing from an inexhaustible store which they have in the unseen and abiding treasure-house. 'All those graces of God,' said John Bunyan in 'Grace Abounding,' 'that now were green on me, were yet but like those crack-groats and fourpence-halfpennies that rich men carry in their purses, when their gold is in their trunks at home. O, I said, my gold was in my trunk at home! In Christ my Lord and Saviour!'[1]

The Value of the Cross.

Eph. iii. 8.—'The unsearchable riches of Christ.'

THE value of an article of commerce depends upon its capacity for supplying our needs. Our needs may be fictitious or they may be real. A piece of old furniture may meet a need of beauty in us but it may meet the purely fictitious need of the collector of curios. It was because Christ supplied the Apostle's need that he had so high an opinion of His value. What was his need? In one word the forgiveness of his sin. And the forgiveness of sin was found in the Cross of Christ.

The gospel of the Cross can never be seen in a true light by any man whose eyes have not been opened in conviction of sin. The Atonement will to the end of time be criticized as an 'immoral transaction,' or 'a survival of Jewish ideas' which has become 'the refuge of bad consciences,' by those who find nothing in their own experience to suggest the necessity of redemption. It is idle to argue on a question when the disputants cannot start upon common ground, and it is worse than useless to discuss forgiveness through the death of Christ till a man is ready to come to the Cross with his life history, and there learn the meaning of sin. The sense of guilt, the sense of defilement, and the sense of incompleteness which are roused in every soul that is truly conscious of the spiritual realities amidst which we live and move and have our being, alone make the death of Christ intelligible and full of glorious wealth for human

[1] *The Spirit of Man*, Selected Essays from 'The Times,' ii. 203.

need. Without these the Atonement must always seem a worthless dogma or a frightened dream, bound in the course of time to be buried in the oblivion into which countless other beliefs have at last been banished by the progress of thought.

To our minds, familiar with his teaching, and by the mercy of God sharing his insight, there seems nothing strange in the riches which St. Paul found in the crucified Christ. But to those whom he strove to win—the Jew, the Roman, and the Greek—amid much that was novel in his gospel, nothing can have appeared more inexplicable than his doctrine of the Cross. For the Jew, the curse of the Cross had stamped the memory of Jesus with eternal shame. For the Roman, to die on the cross was to forfeit all claim even to common respect, and a crucified God was an insult to his intelligence. For the Greek, the Cross with its degrading sufferings was a violation of his sense of beauty, and sheer in the teeth of all his æsthetic ideals, and he could not even associate with it the pallid sweetness of philosophic altruism which modern sentiment discovers in the Passion of our Lord. To all alike the Cross was the brand of servitude, the seal of failure set upon the life of One who had struggled with oncoming defeat in vain; and the 'It is finished' of the death hour was the cry of relief uttered by a weary spirit as it fled away into the unknown, released at last from ignominy and pain. In a word, to the world of St. Paul's day the Cross was poverty—the poverty of falure, of shame, of unmitigated loss. And yet there is no attempt in the New Testament to obscure the Cross behind the glory of the Resurrection; there is no struggling to explain it away as an awkward incident of which the less said the better for faith. The Apostles boldly grasp the Cross and carry it as their banner, and exhaust the resources of language to find terms glowing enough to describe the joy which it implies for them. For St. Paul, in particular, the Cross has touched life and death with unimaginable beauty. Poor, through the Cross he is the possessor of all things; dying, through the Cross he is but entering on a fuller life; afflicted, through the Cross he is already beginning to enjoy 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Persecution and shame cannot deprive him of that wealth which fills his life with abundance and satisfies his heart with a great content.

Yea, through life, death, through sorrow and through sinning,
Christ shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed;
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

1. The first need which is disclosed by experience and recognized in the Cross is *the sense of guilt*. There is a subtle tendency in the thought of our time to obscure, if not to deny, the idea of guilt. The philosophy of evolution, while it has illumined much that was dark in the history of man's nature, has almost imperceptibly thrown into the shadow the fact of personal responsibility, and softened older and truer conceptions of the dignity of moral law. It is not difficult to understand how the average man who believes in the law of heredity, as modern science expounds it, finds in it a subterfuge to excuse his sins. To the thorough-going evolutionist sin is but the deficiency of an imperfect being struggling upwards to perfection, who, because he is naturally imperfect, naturally sins. The evil tendencies in him are, from this point of view, relics of a lower nature for which he is only in a very artificial sense responsible, and sin—it almost of necessity follows—begins to lose the idea of guilt. And yet, as we read the history of our race, is not one of the most persistent and constantly recurring facts observable in the consciousness of men that sense of guilt which, while it may easily be denied in the interests of a theory, age after age asserts itself again?

And so we turn to the Cross, to ask its message, as it speaks of this load of sinfulness which weighs us down. There is, it is true, no comfort for an awakened conscience in the first lesson of the death of Christ, for the

Cross, as we see it first, only increases the sense of guilt which we bring with us from our experience to Him. In the crucifixion of Jesus the guilt of man, which is the result of his choice of evil in spite of all the counter-claims of good, is seen at its extreme. Incarnate Goodness came to men; and men refused Him, and nailed Him to the Tree of Shame. In that supreme sin there stands for ever a witness of the guilt of man against all that he may urge for himself upon the favour of God. But the Cross does much more than emphasize the sense of guilt; it offers itself as a Divine relief which liberates through its blessed pardon, and brings peace to the weary spirit in the assurance that its burden is removed. Strange it is that that which so quickens the sense of guilt should be also that which relieves it! Strange that that which convicts should also be that which acquits! Strange that that which proves our poverty should be that which brings us wealth! And yet so it is; for the whole teaching of the New Testament concerning the death of Christ is meaningless if it is not through that death that the bonds of guilt are loosened from the sinner's soul. Well may the heart, quickened by the touch of God to see the meaning of the Passion, exclaim in words which have been preserved for us from the first days of the Church: 'O the sweet exchange! O the unexpected benefits! that the iniquity of many should be concealed in one Righteous Man.'[1] 'He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

¶ 'What is that you once said?' asked a distressed woman of me the other day in a remote corner of this country, 'what is that you once said of the love of Christ to sinners? Tell it me once again!' And she helped my memory until I had recovered the word she wanted, and it was this: 'He hath loved thee more than thou hast loved thy sin!' And again I repeat it, that everybody may know that 'where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound,' and that in this deep and dark necessity, where every other form of wealth fails, the 'unsearchable riches of Christ' are all-sufficient, for He has 'purchased our redemption with His blood.'[1]

2. But the sense of guilt is only one element in the human experience of sin. Quite as real, and no less menacing, is *the sense of defilement*. There are, broadly speaking, two ways in which the conscience of man convicts him of sin. The first is by a glance backward over the history of his past life, the second by a glance inward upon his personal character. As he surveys the story of days that are gone, there is outlined before him a record of evil done and good left undone which tells him that he has soiled and spoiled the opportunities that God has given him for living according to His will. His past is defiled, and he knows that it cannot bear the searching scrutiny of a holy God. The pages of his life are darkened with many a shameful blot; and he knows that each day increases the sinful record against him. But it is when he looks within himself that the sense of defilement becomes keenest. That outward life which lies behind him—it is the outcome of a deeper evil within; it is the work of a soul corrupted at its core. Sin has entered into his nature, and maimed and paralyzed it; sin has spread like a foul disease through his spiritual system, till his whole manhood is touched and tainted by its malign influence. The thoughts he thinks, the words he speaks, the deeds he performs day by day are infected by it.

He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

And no power of his own can ever avail to separate him from the pervading evil which has defiled the very springs of being in the personality which is himself.

Who that has learned to add to the cry of the returning prodigal, 'Father, I have sinned,' that other bitter cry of need, 'Father, I am defiled,' but welcomes as the very voice of God the revelation that 'the blood of Jesus

[1] *The Epistle of Diognetus.*

[1] J. H. Jowett, *The Silver Lining*, 177.

Christ cleanseth us from all sin'? Like the grace of healing ministered by those hands of Jesus, which cooled the fevered blood and brought health and energy into paralyzed limbs; like the swift, resistless impulse which sped from His purifying touch through the leper's wasted frame, is the power that flows from His Cross into the sinful soul, and the wealth of life that is poured from His Risen Person into the poverty of our misery and need. Let those deny the power of the Cross of Jesus who have never found in the midst of a bitter experience of the defilement of sin the purity which it bestows on those who are cleansed through His holy blood.

¶ I happened to pick up a report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In one of its pages I find a story told by the society's colporteur at Port Said. He boarded an incoming steamer, and, on the lower deck, found a German sailor sweeping out a cabin. The man was greatly depressed. In the course of conversation, each claimed to be a greater sinner than the other.

'What!' exclaimed the sailor, 'why, you are the first man to tell me that he is a greater sinner than I am!'

He took a Gospel from the colporteur's hands and began to read.

'Ah,' he sighed, 'that I were a little child again and could read it with a clean heart!'

The remark was overheard by some of his shipmates.

'Is that *you,* Jansen ' they asked; 'what wonder has happened to you?'

'No wonder at all,' the man replied. *'I want to sweep out my heart, and I am buying a broom*!'

The broom that he bought is by no means a new one, but it sweeps wonderfully clean for all that![1]

3. The sense of guilt, the sense of defilement —under the shadow of the Cross of Jesus Christ, these two elements of human poverty witness to the riches of Him who relieves them. But there is yet another sense of need which is satisfied in the Cross. It is *the sense of incompleteness.*

It has been felt by thoughtful men in every age that one of the strongest arguments for the immortality of the soul is the imperfection of the present life taken by itself, without a life to come in which all that is partial and unfinished here shall be completed and fulfilled. As we strive to rid ourselves of the blindness with which custom holds most of us from really looking facts in the face, and examine this strange scene which we call life, the feeling grows that we are in the midst of what can only be a part of a great whole. Incompleteness is written large over every department of human life. Let a man stand by the grave of one he loves, and begin to realize that the living, intelligent being whom he knew has left for ever the surroundings amidst which he moved, and his heart, if he will allow it to speak, will tell him as clearly as it tells him anything at all that this cannot be the end, and that the personality which animated the beloved form that now lies still and cold must still live, and know, and think, and move—yes, and do all this in a larger and more perfect state, or life is but an evil dream, a vanity of vanities which deludes and tortures us with promises that can never be fulfilled. In the poet's words:—

> My own dim life should teach me this,
> That life shall live for evermore,
> Else earth is darkness at the core,
> And dust and ashes all that is.

The consciousness of man cannot but look for a perfect state to come, just as it cannot help feeling that good must finally triumph, and evil at last be overthrown.

Thus does life fail to offer the completeness for which we long; and heavy-footed and weary we find our way to Calvary to look upon the vision which God has opened there of a redemption in which that completeness is promised, nay, already begun. The Cross is not only the prophecy of completeness deferred to another world; possessing it, we possess already the 'all things' which are promised to faith. Christ Crucified has opened

[1] F. W. Boreham, *Rubble and Roseleaves,* 83.

the gates of Paradise that here already we may enter in, and in Him we have the redemption which 'makes all things new.' There is no hope too bright to cherish as we stand adoring at the foot of His Cross. Death puts a closure upon the thought of all human fulfilments; but hard by the Cross there is a garden, and in the garden an open sepulchre, where One was laid who, having overcome death, has brought life and immortality to light through His Resurrection. 'Ye are complete in Him.' Yes, in Him we have completeness; and we may take our broken lives to Him that in Him they may be wrought into a perfect whole. The poor fragments of our incompleteness are in His Passion touched and knit up into a unity which faith sees foreshadowed even here below.

If death be final, what is life, with all
  Its lavish promises, its thwarted aims,
  Its lost ideals, its dishonoured claims,
Its uncompleted growth? A prison wall,
Whose heartless stones but echo back our call;
  An epitaph recording but our names;
  A puppet-stage where joys and griefs and shames
Furnish a demon jesters' carnival;
A plan without a purpose or a form;
  A roofless temple; an unfinished tale.
And men like madrepores through calm and storm
  Toil, die to build a branch of fossil frail,
And add from all their dreams, thoughts, acts, belief,
A few more inches to a coral-reef.[1]

Unsearchable Riches

Eph. iii. 8.—'The unsearchable riches of Christ.'

It is not easy to express in one word the meaning of Paul's epithet applied to the riches of Christ. Perhaps one English word cannot express it. Perhaps Paul felt the inadequacy of his own word. It seems to mean (as in Rom. ii. 33) 'inscrutable.' But it means more than that. Dr. Weymouth speaks of the '*exhaustless* wealth' of Christ; Dr. Moffatt renders it '*fathomless* wealth'; whilst Dr. Jowett tells a story. 'Once,' he says, 'I heard Dr. Rendel Harris read the chapter in which these words are found, and he read from his pocket Greek Testament, and gave his own translation. And I remember how, when he came to this passage, he threw out his arms in a wide gesture as he repeated the words 'the *unexplorable* wealth of Christ.' We had a suggestion of a vast continent, not yet tracked out, with roads only here and there.'[1]

1. Jesus Christ has created so exacting a conception of Himself in the minds of men that no ministry of man can satisfy it. No human ministry can express it. In all our best representations of the Lord there is always a missing something, an 'unsearchable' something, which the most masterly fingers cannot span.

(1) Art cannot express Him. I gazed, the other day, upon a powerful picture of our Saviour in conversation with Simon Peter. They were sitting together in Peter's fishing-boat, drawn up upon the beach, and the disciple was busy mending his nets. And as I looked upon the fisherman—strong, muscular, brawny, and watched him as he stayed his fingers, and lifted his keen, restless, impulsive, friendly eyes upon his Master—I said to myself, 'That's my Peter! Whenever in coming days I seek communion with him, this is the likeness that will occupy my vision! I want no other! The inspired artist has given me Simon Peter, and I am satisfied!' But when I turned from the fisherman to his Lord my heart gave no leap of contented recognition. No, it was not my Saviour! There were lines of suggestive strength and beauty, but my heart withheld its homage. There was amazing wealth in the representation, but who can express 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'? 'No, that is not my Saviour,' I said, and I turned away unsatisfied.[2]

(2) Nor can literature express Him. The finest lineaments leave the half untold. Tenny-

[1] C. P. Cranch.

[1] F. W. Boreham, *The Uttermost Star*, 101.
[2] J. H. Jowett, *The Silver Lining*, 171.

son has given us his conception of the Christman in King Arthur, as Thackeray has given us his in the delicate and lovely likeness of Colonel Newcome, but when our hearts have kindled and glowed in their masculine refinements, when we have stood wondering at the mingled strength and transparency of their life as it moves and shines like a glassy sea, our very wonder is chilled if we are told that the likeness must be interpreted as the representation of our Lord. No, a fine man, but not my Saviour! The heart is unsatisfied. And so it is with *all* human ministries—with music and literature and art; they can give us a little of the glory, they can give us diamond wealth as we see it in the jeweller's window, but the diamond mines are unexplored. So exacting is the conception which the Lord Himself has given us, that no human representation is possible, and all our expectations fall dispirited before every attempt to portray 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

2. Faith alone obtains a real knowledge of the wealth of Christ, for faith is the means by which all that wealth becomes ours. What, then, does faith find in Christ?

(1) *Knowledge.*—Knowledge in almost any shape is wealth, but there are kinds of knowledge which are higher and more valuable than others. There is a knowledge which illuminates—a knowledge which flashes its light over the problems of life and the facts of the universe. This is the sort of knowledge that men will give almost any amount of money to secure. Now, Paul was aware that there was this in Christ; and so are we aware, who know Christ. The men of thought and ideas come forward with wide-ranging conceptions, with solutions of the great problems which have some measure of light in them. But the more we think and weigh these things, the more we see how vastly wider in their range are Christ's ideas, how immensely deeper His solutions. Every now and then the thinking world comes wondering back to these solutions of Christ, amazed to find that they are so much wider and deeper than it had thought. Of course there are those who know Christ who have never realized this fund of wealth. But for those to whom this sort of wealth *is* of any consequence, it remains eternally true that 'in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'

¶ The characteristic truth was uttered concerning Jesus when the evangelist declared that He needed not that any man should teach Him. This did not mean that He was not, humanly speaking, dependent upon the rote and order of learning; but that beyond His teachers in childhood, and beyond the books of nature and life in manhood, His perception laid hold upon every form of verity, which, in fact, was only an answer to His own conscious being.[1]

(2) *Experience.*—In Christ there is not a sameness of experience, but an immense variety of experience; not one or two emotions, but a world of emotions. The true Christian life is like Bunyan's immortal work, a splendidly dramatic, varied, comprehensive thing. Paul's life, before he met Christ, was a monotonous respectability and an unsatisfied craving. After he met Christ it was a brimming joy and a burning enthusiasm, chequered and enhanced by an experience varied and extraordinary, a strange tale of daring and suffering, the labours of Hercules and the endurances of Ulysses combined in one. When we read of his courage and achievements, his privations, stripes, imprisonments, the torrent of envenomed hate that was always being discharged at him, we say—poor Paul! Why poor? It was a very terrible thing, doubtless, to have to stand before kings and rulers; but it was a very splendid thing to have stood. It was a very terrible thing to be almost blasted by light from heaven, and to have to bear shattered health and painful eyes through life ever afterwards, but it was a splendid thing to have had visions. Do you think Paul at the end would rather have had the solemn inanities and petty observances of an ordinary Jewish Rabbi at Jerusalem? Now, what is true for Paul is true in large measure for us. For us there are in Christ the riches of a splendidly varied experience.

[1] H. M. du Bose, *The Consciousness of Jesus*, 45.

John Bunyan was a tinker and a Baptist minister in Bedford, neither profession being commonly regarded as very interesting. But look at that wealth of experience which he describes the Christian life as furnishing. It is true he had a fervid imagination, so that he painted 'to the life' and 'for all time'; but he painted only what he saw and had gone through, and he paints only those lights and shades, those heights and depths, those strange vicissitudes of feeling and action which we can know if we live the Christian life and taste its riches of experience.

(3) *Character.*—Centuries ago Spain was in possession of immensely greater natural resources than any other European nation. But the wealth of modern times came not to Spain, but to Holland and Great Britain, because there were in them a stronger moral fibre and a higher religious principle. These Gentiles among whom Paul was going, preaching his unsearchable riches, were wealthy enough, many of them, in material things. But this material wealth was certain to ebb away from their grasp, because they had not character enough to keep it. Credit, which is a moral quality, a piece of character, is the life of trade. A merchant knows that thorough trustworthiness is worth its weight in gold. He would often give almost any amount of gold to secure it, but sometimes it is not to be got at any price. Character is worth more than gold, for within certain limits you can always turn character into gold—moral wealth into material wealth. But you cannot reverse the process, and turn the material wealth into the moral wealth. Paul knew that he carried with him the secret of transforming men's characters, this wealth-giving power, in his preaching of Christ, because he had a signal instance of it before him at the moment.

Just about the same time that he wrote this letter he wrote that other to his friend Philemon, of Colosse, arranging for the return of a runaway slave who had come to Rome and had been converted. St. Paul says that this Onesimus had previously been unprofitable to Philemon—a source of pecuniary loss—but that he was now a source of gain, and that was solely because he had found honesty, conscience, character.

(4) *Love.*—There is such a thing as wealth of love. Money is of value only because it can command services and enjoyment, can enrich life—touching it with golden hues. But love does all this directly. We find wealthy and successful men to whom love has been denied making desperate efforts far on in life to secure this most valuable possession, in which they find themselves deficient, willing to spend largely in order to purchase a little affection. Paul had a love which buoyed up his own life and flowed out freely, feeding other lives. Now, granting that Paul had noble natural faculties, it is quite certain that he did not learn to love after this fashion until he learnt Christ. He certainly was not loving when, just before he had met Christ, he was going about breathing threatenings and slaughter. But a love had found him, a love that passed knowledge, and he had found a love, a secret of loving and being loved, that had immeasurably increased the value of his life both to himself and to others.

How can one man, how can all men,
  How can we be like St. Paul,
Like St. John, or like St. Peter,
  Like the least of all
  Blessed Saints? for we are small.

Love can make us like St. Peter,
  Love can make us like St. Paul,
Love can make us like the blessed
  Bosom friend of all,
  Great St. John, tho' we are small.

Love which clings and trusts and worships,
  Love which rises from a fall,
Love which, prompting glad obedience,
  Labours most of all,
  Love makes great the great and small.[1]

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

Many-Coloured Wisdom.

Eph. iii. 10.—'The manifold (Gr. *many-coloured*) wisdom of God.'

Many students have believed that they could detect in the Epistle to the Ephesians the influence of Rome upon the Apostle, for it was probably during his captivity there that it was written. It was only natural that Rome should impress him; for he was a Roman citizen, and its genius was akin to his own mind. He had always longed to see Rome, and, although he was brought there in chains, and to be tried for his life, nothing is allowed to diminish the sense of triumph that his wish has been realized and the standard of the Faith has been planted in Cæsar's household.

He was impressed with the Imperial power, the genius that could hold so many races under its sway. Within the city were gathered men from all over the known world, bringing with them their differing minds and their strange creeds. Rome was being invaded by the gods of the East, and religions that were dying elsewhere came here to find a new lease of life. Instead of being appalled by this confusion, Paul was not only the more determined to win this varied crowd for Christ, but he became increasingly aware that Christ contained width enough to hold them all. The mystery that was revealed to him in Rome was that the Gentiles were fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. And here in Rome 'Gentiles' did not mean simply non-Jews; the term had come to have a positive significance and to be filled with vaster meaning: for it included all those nations with which the streets of Rome were teeming. And, looking at their infinite variety and, perhaps, at their richly coloured garb, Paul realized that their need could only be matched in the unsearchable riches of Christ and the manifold wisdom of God.

As he searched round for a word to describe this infinite variety which was to be found in the mind of God, he lit on a rare Greek word, and one cannot help thinking that its original meaning carried, even if unconsciously, some attraction to his mind: 'many-coloured,' varied, it is, for it pictures a garden glowing with the colours of all kinds of flowers.

1. The Church was to take the place of the Roman Empire, to gather into its bosom all the nations of the world, to satisfy the need of every human heart, and to unify all human aspirations. But this was not to be done as the Roman Empire had attempted it, by coercing every one into uniformity, it was to be done by showing that God had some great design in creating the multitudinous variety of humanity (not only the racial diversities, but the infinitely varying types and temperaments) by revealing the place they were meant to occupy in the harmony of the whole.

St. Paul has provided us with many metaphors for setting forth the nature of this union and harmony, each of them insisting upon the dual facts of diversity and unity; but there is one contained in this word 'many-coloured' which might have been developed with great profit. The various nations and the different types correspond to the different colours. So far from being irreconcilable, they were made to complement one another; for they are all derived from the one light, which is broken up into its constituent colours for the increase of our joy. This explains the vari-coloured foundations of the eternal city: built from every type of our multitudinous humanity.

But perhaps there is no more beautiful image possible than that of a garden where each flower is allowed to make its contribution of colour and beauty, admirable in itself, and yet going to make up a scene of delights. The Church was meant to be Christ's garden, neither, surely, with the different flowers planted out in beds, primly divided off from one another, nor rioting in careless and disordered profusion, but just that which is the greatest pleasure, flowers of all kinds growing together as in an old-world garden, lavish, glorious, and of all kinds and colours, yet making one simple effect of pure and surpassing joy.

It is the duty of the Church's ministry to show how the one truth of God is able to be revealed in countless colours, turning the prism of theology this way and that, until each pure, delightful colour is flashed upon the eye; to see its varied application, its endless meaning, its inexhaustible treasures; each a coloured loveliness, all sheer loveliness. We have got to show how gay Christianity really is; how from the very tears of men it begets the rainbow; how, when the purposes of God are broken by the rebellion of men, it only wins therefrom the greater beauty.

2. Our Christian life must be one that is full of colour. White is the characteristic colour of purity and sainthood. But whiteness is not the absence of colour; it is the perfect mingling of all the pure colours. These give it its glow and sense of brightness. Therefore, if it is saintship we aspire after—and there is no other ambition worth a moment's concern—we must take care that we include all the virtues. People are not canonized because they specialized in one virtue, but because they had all the virtues, and those in an intense and heroic degree. We cannot specialize in the Christian life; we must be perfect as our Father is perfect, and that means holding all the virtues together: for apart they are not virtues at all.

It is our business to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. That seems an ambitious and almost irreverent undertaking. And yet it must be done. Doctrines, the great principles of Christianity, have got to be expressed in a life which shows how many-coloured, how infinitely beautiful it is. We must win men and women to our religion, not by apologetic, not by dogmatic, but by æsthetic: the attractions of a fine and lovely character. There must be the basis of truth, but just because it is truth it must be made beautiful. Then one day we shall be made ready to see God, made ready by the perfect purity of our heart. For God is neither smoke nor fog, but glorious colour; and when, at last, His light shines unclouded upon us, it will break into a thousand happy colours, and we shall begin that beatific life which is endless joy and inexhaustible pleasure because it is fed from the many-coloured wisdom of the infinite Mind.[1]

Purpose in Life.

Eph. iii. 11.—'The eternal purpose.'

No man or woman can be at their best until they have found a purpose in life. In growing years, no doubt, if men are in circumstances where leisure is allowed them, they may look round upon this world in which they find themselves simply for the sheer pleasure of seeing it, simply to taste its experiences, simply to discover what it has to say to them. They may be content just to look, to hear, to feel, to admire, to know. This is the peculiar and proper joy of youth, just to make experiments. Would that all our young people were given the opportunity to enjoy this, their bountiful inheritance!

But after a time, even when all is most favourable, a secret restlessness begins to give warning that this period of experiences is bound to close. It is discovered to be but a tentative, preliminary period—a light skirmishing before the serious work is taken in hand. A sterner stress must be obeyed. Something from within forbids an indefinite lingering within the enchantments of irresponsible youth. A voice grows upon the inner ear, repeating with insistence, 'Sweet, indeed, it is to look on all things with an equal eye; to be glad to touch and taste and pass on. But you may not dally or delay in this happy fairyland. This is but the dream of what life might be; but the day draws on fast when life itself must make a beginning. Life is no dreamy enjoyment of manifold experiences. Life is an affair of the will; life is action; life is labour; life is effort; life is consecration; life is sacrifice. To live, you must make a choice out of all that has been proffered to you. You must determine in what direction you will act. What, then, is your choice?'

[1] W. E. Orchard, *The True Patriotism*, 16ff.

Man to be fully himself must have a purpose. What, then, is a purpose?

1. It must be something older, deeper, stronger, than ourselves. That is our prime need. We ask of a purpose that it should shift the centre of gravity outside ourselves. It is ourselves that we want to escape; the weariness, the stupidity, the futile disappointment of self-service. We are born to serve something nobler than ourselves, born to engage in a life older and vaster than our own. That is why we instinctively feel the necessity of passing under the pressure of some duty, some activity, to which we may stand committed, dedicated, yielded. The purpose that should fulfil us must be one that puts us to school. It must introduce order and law into our aimless ways, into our shifting emotions, so that, by the measure of its requirements, we may know what we can afford to do, and what we must leave undone; what we may keep, and what we may throw aside. It must save us from the misery of indecisive indifference—the misery of feeling that it does not matter the least bit in the world what we do, or how and when we do it.

¶ A true man always sees more than he can attain, for his ideal is greater than himself. But his efforts do not on that account slacken. The true measure of a noble life is found in the increasing clearness of its vision of the ideal, towards which it strives with ever-waxing ardour.

The ideal is more than a matter of taste created by a man's own imagination or desire. It was not created by him; it comes from outside, it has a supernatural element. Herein lie its reality, its strength, its power to evoke devoted effort, and its permanence. But though the man of true purpose has 'hitched his wagon to a star,' he finds the light of his ideal in his own heart. Far above him, it is still very near. It is there in the secret recesses of his being. Though he cannot completely grasp its meaning or attain its full contents, it is his. The set purpose of effort in following the vision has its own reward. It provides

> One great aim, like a guiding-star above,
> Which tasked strength, wisdom, stateliness, to lift
> Their manhood to the height that takes the prize.

This steadfastness to a true purpose brings its own revelation of life's worth. If it is declared that truth and honour are higher gifts than life, we may answer that they are the constant elements of all true life. He who put the searching question: 'What will a man give in exchange for his life?' to those who would claim discipleship to Him, showed that man's life is divine as well as human—all the more human because it is endowed with the grace of supernatural power. Those who have learnt to reckon life by the Master's standard know its true worth, but when once they have learnt to value it as He values it, they find while it increases infinitely in its powers its purpose is attained in uttermost self-sacrifice. The more a man ventures in the treasure of life, the more opportunities he finds for spending it.[1]

¶ Delivering his Inaugural Address as Principal of the New College, Edinburgh, Dr. Whyte said: 'Your present Principal has been told that there was a full and a kind-hearted house on that Assembly night when he was led in to receive his orders from the Moderator. It may have been so, only he did not see the Assembly all that night. All that night his eyes were away back sixty years before that Assembly night. Sixty years exactly to this anniversary day, the thirteenth of October, at about this very hour in the afternoon. And what he then saw, and this moment sees and hears, was a poor little fellow of twelve years old who was saying to his mother: "Don't cry, mother; don't be afraid, for I will go and serve out my time; but, mind you, I am going to be a minister." '[2]

2. A purpose must wield authority over us. That, certainly, we ask of it. And yet, if it

[1] *Life's True Values*, Selected Essays from 'The Times,' i. 56.

[2] G. F. Barbour, *The Life of Alexander Whyte*, 29.

is to occupy us wholly and richly, it must root this authority deep down within the soil of our innermost being. It must claim us by a living touch such as evokes in us the voluntary witness to its validity. We must be able to bear our witness to its worth, to set our seal to it that it is a true and vital purpose. We must be able to transport ourselves into it, to fuse ourselves with it, so that we and it become one undivided thing; and we can hardly say at last whether we have chosen it or it has chosen us. For herein lies our human privilege, not indeed to create the world in which we are, but to find ourselves able to co-operate with it, to respond to it, to identify ourselves with it, even as if it had been indeed our own creation. This is our freedom—the freedom of serving, not as slaves, but as sons; not as bowing under an external necessity, but as closing, in willing recognition and delight, with that which we obey, contributing to it our own momentum, our own joyful adherence, our own intelligent corroboration. This is our privilege as children of God.

¶ There are men who after passing middle life find every plan go to pieces, every expectation frustrated. But not nearly so with Livingstone. Long before he *said* what long later he had to *live* to the last letter, 'The end of the Geographical feat is the beginning of the Missionary opportunity.' 'I am,' said he, 'I am a missionary, heart and soul: God had an only Son, and He was a missionary and a physician. A poor, poor imitation I am or wish to be. In this service I hope to live, in it I wish to die.' [1]

3. This happy, this blessed privilege—we see now what it is. It is the privilege of discovering ourselves at one with Him who made the world; the privilege of passing within the busy throng of His eternal activities; the privilege of moving within His larger, ampler movements—in the liberty of service, in the ardour of free companionship; fellow-workers with God in the husbandry of this vast vineyard, fulfilling a purpose which is His and yet is ours. In discovering, in embracing such a purpose, we are lifted to a higher plane. We are caught up by it into the workshop where worlds are created. The rush and roar of the great looms of God are clanging round us, weaving the web of human history. And in that tremendous action we too, in our remote corner, are playing our little part; through our fingers the rapid threads go floating and mingling. Ah! the inspiration of it! We lift our eyes in grateful hope; we kindle and are aglow. Not in vain are we alive, blessed be God!

Lord, I am being changed! Some unseen power
Is working in me, strangely, day by day—
Remaking me:
Is it my faith in Thee—
My knowledge of Thee, or my love to Thee?
Nay, it is Thou!
There is no power in me—
No grace in me, for such a task as this.

Work out Thy will! I lie beneath Thy hand,
As clay beneath the potter's:
Re-create
The life that I have marred, O living One,
And form it in the likeness of Thine own.[1]

The Purpose and the Power.

Eph. iii. 11.—'According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus.'
Eph. iii. 20.—'According to the power that worketh in us.'

Our modern Christianity falls short of the Christianity of the New Testament in that we have so little of that forward-looking, forward-striving, impulse which the gospel awakened in the first believers. They could rejoice in hope of the glory of God. They confidently hoped that God would manifest His glory; that He would go on with what He had begun in Jesus Christ; that the light then shining would shine more and more unto the perfect day; that in the on-coming ages He would show in kindness toward men the exceeding riches of His grace in Christ Jesus. To St.

[1] D. Crawford, *Back to the Long Grass*, 22.

[1] E. H. Divall, *A Believer's Rest*, 103.

Paul's faith there was a great Power of God engaged in working out a great Purpose of God. Both the Purpose and the Power had been manifested in Christ. The Purpose was to sum up all things, to bring all things under one head, in Christ; the Power was working spiritually in the world and in men towards the accomplishment of that Purpose.

1. If we were asked to give a short description of the Holy Scriptures, we should not be far wrong if we said that they were the Book of the Purpose of God.

(1) We take the Old Testament, in which there is so much that is difficult, about which we have still so much to learn, and perhaps to unlearn, and we see this, that through it all—its various books, and its different periods—there runs the thread of God's Purpose. It begins from God, and draws all from Him at the outset, unlike other similar ancient accounts of the world's beginnings. And very soon we are put upon the track of a special Purpose of God. The thought which runs through and colours from end to end the record of the national life given by Israel's prophets, and psalmists, and chroniclers, is that of God's Providence and Purpose shaping for Himself a people of His choice. Strange to say, this conviction grows most distinct, and deep, and spiritual in that period of the Prophets when Israel's life seemed near destruction; and, from the nation's death in the Babylonian Captivity, the faith in God's Purpose rises almost as with new-born life.

(2) When we turn from the Old Testament to the New, this wonderful anticipation and assurance of a Purpose of God is met by a fulfilment. It comes to pass as had been believed. In Israel arises that which has a blessing for all the nations of the earth. Of Israel as concerning the flesh, He came who was to declare Himself the Light and Life of men. And in the name of Jesus Christ the good tidings went forth that there is a kindness of God to men, that there is a meaning for life which goes beyond death, that there is a power of righteousness and love which, across all the sin and sorrow of the world, is working out a purpose of victory and peace. In the heart and life of our Lord Himself Israel's faith in God's Purpose was made perfect. In life and death that Purpose was ever before His eyes: 'Thou hast sent me'; 'The will of him that sent me'; 'My Father's business'; 'The work which thou gavest me to do'; It is finished.' The glory and the joy, the sorrow and the burden of that great Purpose were ever on His Soul. It was the inspiration of His Life.

2. But the fulfilment was not to be an end. It would be truer to say that it was a beginning. Till then all had been preparation, waiting for the Purpose of God. Now in Him it was declared, and in Him it was accomplished; but from Him it was again to go forth. What He had accomplished for man in the days of His earthly work, it is His glory to accomplish in man gradually and continually till time shall end. Ascended, He was not lost. Invisible, He was present in power. Exalted to the Right Hand of Power, He shed forth the Spirit who was, through the Apostles, to found the Church, and 'disciple' the world. Again, the purpose of God goes forward; the mustard seed is to grow into the tree, the leaven is to work through the three measures of meal; the net is to gather of every kind; the crop is to spring up gradually and secretly towards the harvest; the teaching is to go forth for all nations. Again, there is an Israel, a people of God, charged with His Purpose; only not now a single race, but a spiritual people, a Church open to all comers, which knows no limit but that of mankind, with its roots in eternity and its issues in eternity. Christ's own faith in God's Purpose passes into those whose Life He is. Again, in the faith of Christians there appears that old trust of Israel and her prophets in the Purpose of God: only, now, how much more distinct, because the great Purpose has been revealed in Christ for all the world. The New Testament glows with it, and in particular it would almost seem as if God had given us St. Paul to show us the greatness, the dignity, the power of this high thought of

the Purpose of God formed in eternity, moving down the ages, revealed in the Incarnation of the Lord, and flowing onward in a stream on which we ourselves are borne towards infinite issues of Wisdom and Love.

(1) Let us think of that Purpose not as a far-off and general thing, but as present with us here, all about us, though we see it not. It takes shape in every act of true and unselfish duty, or kindness, or sacrifice which God's eye sees. It is found in every courageous resistance to sin and temptation, in every work or labour of true philanthropy and wholesome civilization claiming our co-operation and help. It is thwarted and hindered (for so He suffers it to be) by the sins of every one of us, by our sloth and indifference and faithlessness. This is the warfare in which the conscience of every man, woman, and child in some way calls them to take part by being and doing what the Will of God desires.

¶ In our practical activity we are also God's fellow-workers. This applies even to the drudgery of everyday duty. Each honest labourer on earth is carrying out a fragment of the Divine plan. Whoever produces or distributes things useful or things beautiful is helping on the good work of the world. To drain the fen, to plough the prairie, to build the cottage, to weave the cloth, to cook the meal, to nurse the sick, to play with the children—is to co-operate with God's great purpose. And when we try, as we say, 'to do good,' we ought to feel ourselves in a special sense the agents and instruments of His will.[1]

None is too lofty for this, none too low,
And none too little;
Jewelled the tear which made a cottage glow
More than a palace, the unavenged blow,
Iron purpose, or the promise faint and brittle;
Footsteps that stumble
But still pursue the goal that is a grave.
Soft answers light as foamflakes on the wave;
Somewhere all fit in (whether high or humble)
The sanctuary, which both power and weakness pave.
Rejected stones
And stories, here transfigured, fashion thrones.[1]

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 141.

(2) And then let us think of this Purpose as dwelling specially in, and specially working through, the Church of God's grace; shaped, endowed, anointed by Himself for this very end, that it may be the nursery of virtues, the missionary of God's message, the almoner of His bounty, the witness of His Light, and Life, and Love; by Him commissioned to save, and guide, to quicken and purify, to smite down evil, and build up good. Yes, we must say these things of the Church of Christ, because they are true and do Him honour, even though our hearts sink and die within us at the thought of how much and how miserably she has often failed and fails to be all this; how much she has neglected her work, how dimly her light has burnt; how much good she has left undone, or to be done by other hands, and in other names, though not by other power than that of her Lord. For here, too, it is God's Will that His Purpose should wait upon men's service, and be helped or hindered by what they are. Here too, in the Church, the power and grace of God are all, but it is through men that they live and work.

¶ Surely, then, if the Church be the Body of the Lord, it will have some likeness to that mortal body in which He tabernacled with us, not only proclaiming the holy love of the Father here among men, but revealing and commending that love, and making it known and felt by men, through the mighty works—all of them wonderful works of love—by which He healed their diseases and comforted their sorrows. Must not the Church of Christ now, in like manner, not only proclaim and reveal in faithful speech and testimony the righteous love of God among men, but also interpret and commend and enforce that love, making it intelligible and real to them, bringing it home

[1] F. W. Orde Ward, *Selected Poems*, 153.

to them and making it true, by those 'greater works' which our Lord promised that His Church, being endued with power from on high, should do in the world? By these works the Lord in His Church would now, as of old, undo the cruel and heavy bonds under which sin has bound our fellow-men, and assuage their bitter sorrows. As upon Christ Himself, so the Spirit of the Lord comes upon His Church, in gracious baptism, and clothes her with the lustrous evidences of her divine mission, as she now, like Him, heals the broken-hearted, preaches deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and sets at liberty them that are bruised.[1]

[1] *John Brown Paton*, 382.

THE SUPREME BLESSINGS.

Eph. iii. 14-19.—'For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.'

In no part of St. Paul's letter does he rise to a higher level than in his prayers, and none of his prayers is fuller of fervour than this wonderful series of petitions. They open out one into the other like some majestic suite of apartments in a great palace-temple, each leading into a loftier and more spacious hall, each drawing nearer the presence chamber, until at last we stand there.

What John xvii. is to the Gospels, this Prayer is to St. Paul's Writings. Connecting it with the preceding Prayer (i. 15-23) we have in these two effusions the loftiest language of human worship not uttered by the Lord Himself.

In pouring forth his aspirations for the spiritual uplifting of his Ephesian converts, the Apostle prays for three main things: strength, indwelling, fulness—(1) the power of the Holy Spirit; (2) the indwelling of Christ in the heart, leading on to the full knowledge of His love; and (3) the realization, to the utmost capacity of the soul, of the fullness of God.

I.

STRENGTH.

'That ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man.'

The most imperative and insistent cry of our generation is for power, more power. Men look for it above, and they look for it around, and they look for it from beneath. The world has certainly learned this—that we cannot achieve anything of importance by personal energy. When once we have learned how to annex the mighty energies of the world, then we can attain any speed, lift any weight, move any mountain. But, however much this world needs mechanical power, it needs far more that strange, mystic, interior energy that makes possible the grandest things of the highest life? We fall short of our great ideals! We struggle vainly to accomplish the perfect enduement! It is here that the strong men faint, here that the young men utterly fall. What we most need to-day is that Divine uplifting, that interior strength, that heavenly virtue that will make the highest life possible, that will make the highest life natural, that will make the highest life delightful. That secret strengthening, that spiritual force, is more necessary to us than anything else. More light—more light in science, in philosophy, in theology; yes, but, more than light, it is strength that we need, the power that worketh mightily, making all Divine righteousness instinctive and delightful.

1. The Divine Spirit is first of all *an expulsive power*. There is not a man who is not conscious that there is within his personality a power that makes for unrighteousness. Some tell us to-day that sin is not positive, it is negative, just as shadow is the absence of light; but we never find the Bible talking of it like that. Whenever it speaks of sin it never speaks of a mighty shadow: it always speaks of the power of darkness. It is the absence of something, no doubt—disease is the absence of health—but it is considerably positive nevertheless. Every man knows as well as he knows anything that there is in us a contradictory element that makes for unrighteousness, an indwelling evil; and how pathetically feeble we are to deal with it! We may do a great many things of ourselves, but we never can shake our life free from the element that tyrannizes over us and brings our best imaginations and ideals and designs to naught. The great teaching of this Book is that the Spirit of God comes to the rescue of the fundamental humanity, the inner man, and as the inner man grows the old man is thrust into narrower room, until finally he is thrust out of the house of life into the darkness outside.

¶ I have been deeply impressed this winter by the tenacity with which old oak leaves have clung to the trees. But there was no need to worry about them or to set up any device for removing them from their place. The new sap is rising, and this positive internal power is exercising dominion, and these old associations are being pushed off their foothold and are quietly dropping into their graves. And it is even so with the new life in Christ. It rises like heavenly sap in the soul. It courses through every faculty and power. It efflorescences in new interests, new discernments, new aptitudes, new passions, new modes and moods of service. And we need not trouble about old associations which may still seek to cling to our lives. They will be quietly crowded out by the new life. Old things pass away; behold, all things become new.[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett.

2. The Spirit is also *a protective power*. All around is a great world of evil, of evil men, things, influences, and in countless ways it appeals to us and puts us in peril. May we not say that the possibilities of transgression are as multiplied as are our opportunities for every kind of duty and pleasure? We are continually conscious of the pressure of temptation. The sirens haunt every sea. Every stage of life, every rank, every situation brings its special danger. Our whole environment abounds with possibilities of evil, with inducements to its commission. Wherein, then, lies our safety in the midst of these multiplied assaults and risks? Our inviolability is guaranteed by our being 'strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man'; by Christ dwelling in our heart through faith. All that is more or less external is concerned with the outworks, whilst the believing heart is the citadel—the magazines are there, the garrison is there, above all, the Captain is there. Our salvation is a question of the reality and depth of our life in Christ; all is precarious that does not hang on this.

¶ The physical world affords many proofs of the fact that external defence sadly fails to secure immunity, and that creatures are safe only in the soundness and vigour of their interior life. The palæontologist is impressed by the fatal effect which an ever-increasing development of armour inevitably produces upon the vitality and persistence of a race. Many animals inhabiting the geological world were encased in extensive, massive, and complicated armour, and in the end this very armour brought about their extinction. The creatures without armour, or whose armour rapidly degenerated, alone survived. Scales, shells, sheaths, carapaces, proved only precarious and temporary defences; if the coat of mail of a creature was not found in its vigorous life, it was doomed. This feature of creature life is recognized as valid in the beasts and birds of the present. It is conceded that many of them are indebted for safety to their peculiar colouration rendering them more or less invisible to their enemies, yet Douglas Dewar, writing concerning the

birds of India, remarks: 'As the hen drongo is a bird capable of looking after herself, there is no necessity for her to be protectively coloured. As I have repeatedly declared, one ounce of good solid pugnacity is a better weapon in the struggle for existence than many pounds of protective colouration.' In other words, its preservation is far more a question of intrinsic vigour than of any trick of concealment. The very same thing appears in plants that the geologist noted in the animals and the fishes of the prehistoric world. Bessari, describing some of the orchids of Borneo, says: It appears to me to be almost a general rule that the more a plant is provided with anomalous, complicated, and uncommon contrivances, the more precarious and difficult must have been its conditions of existence in past evolutive periods. They have attempted to better their position by special adaptations, but the complications attending these have finally proved a disadvantage rather than an advantage to them.' They were deficient in vitality to face and overcome the difficulty of their environment and sought to perpetuate themselves by politic devices, which in the end practically brought about their extinction. No exterior precaution atones for the absence of central heat and force.[1]

3. The Spirit of God is *the perfecting power*. With evil expelled, rendered immune against environment, it is according to the measure of the Spirit that is within us that we are perfected. There is not a sincere man who is not as much troubled by his virtues as by his faults. There is not a man who thinks of his virtues but he thinks of what the poet says:—

Forgive his crimes, forgive his virtues too,
Those lesser faults, half converts to the right.

Yes, we have got the virtues, but we want maturity, we want perfection. How perpetually we feel that our virtues lack in reality, lack in the glow of life, lack in colour, lack in aroma! It is very difficult to distinguish them as virtues at all, as our friends who have most to do with us often find out. It is for us to call in the great Gardener, for us to call in the action of the Spirit of God, and all these qualities of ours that are so hesitating to-day, these crude virtues, these excellencies that are so fallen, these proprieties that are so spiritless, shall become fruits of light, love, meekness, patience, kindness, temperance,—purple and golden, lustrous, fit for the garden of heaven. That is what we want. There is the idea of ripening in the text. What a difference there is between good men! What a difference between the same Christian at different times! And the Apostle is full of the idea—the Spirit of God ripening the spirit of men and bringing to final perfection all the magnificent possibilities that are wrapped up in the deeps of our nature.

And having thus created me,
Thus rooted me, he bade me grow,
Guiltless for ever, like a tree
That buds and blooms, nor seeks to know
The law by which it prospers so:
But sure that thought and word and deed
All go to swell his love for me,
Me, made because that love had need
Of something irreversibly
Pledged solely its content to be.[1]

II.

INDWELLING.

'That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.'

The Indwelling of Christ is no uncommon idea in the New Testament. On the contrary, in one form or other it appears again and again. For example, the Apostle Paul describes his conversion in this manner, 'It pleased God to reveal his son *in me*.' He describes that mystery whose glorious riches he disclosed to the Gentiles as 'Christ *in you* the hope of glory.' Our Saviour Himself, in His great high-priestly prayer before the

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Shepherd of the Sea*, 105.

[1] Browning.

crucifixion, prays on behalf of His disciples that 'the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them and I in them.' These are specimens of passages from other parts of the New Testament, in which the same thought appears.

1. The indwelling of Christ in the believing heart is to be regarded as *a plain literal fact*. To the man who does not believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ that is nonsense; but to those who see in Him the manifested incarnate God, there ought to be no difficulty in accepting as the simple literal force of the words before us this truth, that in every soul where faith, however feeble, has been exercised, there Jesus Christ does verily abide. It is not to be weakened down into any notion of participation in His likeness, sympathy with His character, submission to His influence, following of His example, listening to His instruction, or the like. A dead Plato may so influence his followers, but that is not how a living Christ influences His disciples. It is no mere influence derived and inseparable from Him, however blessed and gracious that influence might be, but it is the presence of His own self, exercising influences which are inseparable from His presence, and only to be realized when He dwells in us.

¶ I do believe that very largely the glad thought of an indwelling Christ who actually operates in our hearts, and is not only for us in the heavens, or with us by some kind of impalpable and metaphorical presence, but in simple, that is to say, in spiritual reality is in our spirits, has faded away from the consciousness of the Christian Church. And so we are called 'mystics' when we preach Christ in the heart. Ah, brother, unless your Christianity be, in the good, deep sense of the word, 'mystical,' it is mechanical, which is worse. I preach, and rejoice that I have to preach, a 'Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Nor do I stop there, but I preach a Christ that is in us, dwelling in our hearts if we be His at all.[1]

[2] A. Maclaren, *Creed and Conduct*, 243.

¶ The Church of Rome teaches in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper that there is a carnal presence linked with the symbols of Christ's dying love. We shrink from such a perversion of truth as that, but while we do so we must take care that we do not fall into an opposite error, and think that this presence of Christ is a mere figure of speech, that it is a metaphorical expression such as Paul uses in another place where he says to the Church at Corinth that he has them in his heart (2 Cor. vii. 3), as a mother will say of her boy that she carries him in her heart, or as a soldier of the French Guard said at Waterloo when the surgeons were probing his wound: 'A little deeper, gentlemen, and you will find the Emperor.'[1]

2. The Apostle's prayer is that the indwelling may be *unbroken and permanent*. He uses here a compound word, which conveys the idea of intensity and of continuity. What he desires, then, is not merely that these Ephesian Christians may have occasional visits of the indwelling Lord, or that at some lofty moments of spiritual enthusiasm they may be conscious that He is with them, but that always, in an unbroken line of deep, calm receptiveness, they may possess, and know that they possess, an indwelling Saviour.

¶ There might be a line of light, never interrupted, running all through our religious experience. Instead of that there is a light point here, and a great gap of darkness there, like the straggling lamps by the wayside in the half-lighted suburbs of some great city. Is that your Christian life, broken by many interruptions, and having often sounding through it the solemn words of the retreating divinty which the old profound legend tells us were heard the night before the Temple on Zion was burnt: 'Let us depart! I will arise and return unto My place till they acknowledge their offences.'[2]

¶ Note the tense of the Greek verb. It is the aorist, and this marks a point, a crisis, a step. Not necessarily a solitary point or crisis.

[1] E. W. Moore, in *The Keswick Week* (1905), p. 50.

[2] A. Maclaren, *Creed and Conduct*, 244.

in the history of the soul. The idea rather is of point and crisis in the abstract, realized it may be in many steps of consciousness, many upward growths and openings, a climbing ladder. Each step will be an advance so true as to be expressed in terms of a new beginning, a new entrance of the really ever-present Lord. The thought points to blissful facts of holy experience, definitely deepening views of the King in His beauty, and definite development of that likeness to Him which comes of 'seeing him as he is.'[1]

3. How shall we prepare the chamber for such a Guest? How shall some poor occupant of a poor hut by the wayside fit it up for the abode of a Prince? The answer lies in the words that precede the text: 'strengthened with power through his spirit in the inward man.' We cannot strengthen the rafters and lift the roof and adorn the halls and furnish the floor in a manner befitting the coming of the King; but we can turn to that Divine Spirit who will expand and embellish and invigorate our whole spirit, and make it capable of receiving the indwelling Christ. Mystical Christianity of the false sort has much to say about the indwelling of God in the soul, but it spoils all its teaching by insisting upon it that the condition on which God dwells in the soul is the soul's purifying itself to receive Him. But we cannot cleanse our hearts so as to bring Christ into them, we must let Him come and cleanse them by the process of His coming, and fit them thereby for His own indwelling.

¶ What is our part in the creation of the intimacy? What is the first thing to do? The first thing to do is to open the door, and that is an act of will. And then what? 'I will come in.' Is that sure? As sure as morning follows night! 'Well, I will just put the room a bit in order and then I'll lift the latch and let Him in!' Nay, but that is a deadly mistake. That is seeking salvation by works. It is trying to do the Saviour's work, and before we let the Saviour in. If we can prepare our hearts for Him we can really do without Him. The Gospel of grace is this—we must open the door upon our neglected and disorderly room, with all its marks of riot and rebellion. And the great Guest Himself will take control. He will prepare the room for His own habitation. And our part is what? To let Him do it!

There is, I think, a classical usage of the word which is translated 'dwell,' and it means to govern, or to administer. This may not be in the New Testament content of the word, but it is certainly in the New Testament gospel. When we let the great Friend into our life He begins to administer our affairs. The Guest becomes the Housekeeper, and He arranges things which are beyond both our strength and understanding. And what again is our part? To let Him do it! To hand everything over to Him in deep, quiet, constant trust.[1]

[1] H. C. G. Moule, *Thoughts on Christian Sanctity*, 89.

III.

FULLNESS.

'That ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.'

This is the climax of Christian attainment. It is an amazing reach of thought and expression. It is, undoubtedly, the greatest of all the great sayings of the Apostle; and it is evident that in it even his nervous and powerful language bends under the weight of the Divine idea which he endeavours to express. To be strengthened with the Spirit's might in the inner man is much. To have Christ dwelling in the heart by faith is more. To be rooted and grounded in love is more still. To comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, is still rapturously more. To be filled with God is surpassingly more. To be filled with the fullness of God is abundantly more. But to be filled with *all* the fullness of God—this is a privilege overwhelmingly great for unworthy man.

[1] J. H. Jowett, *Life in the Heights*, 120.

1. What does it mean? Look at the standard of fullness. 'Unto'—not 'with'—it is the standard, not the material. God's fullness is not to be poured into us; we are to be raised toward that standard of fullness, not in one particular but in all—unto the whole fullness of God. It may mean unto the fullness which God possesses; or it may mean unto the fullness which He provides. It may mean either that the enlargement of our spiritual apprehension is a means toward obtaining all the wonderful goods that God has in store for us; or it may mean that by it we shall be brought to a height of attainment comparable only to His attainments. No matter which it means. It is enough in either meaning for any Christian's hope. But there is no reason to doubt that it does mean the greatest thing: we shall be filled unto the whole fullness of God. We shall be like Him, and like Him only of all Beings in the universe. It is a giddy height to which our eyes are thus raised. No wonder we need spiritual strengthening to discern the summit of this peak of promise.

Of course it does not mean that we are to be transmuted into God, so that each of us will be able to assert a right to a place of equality in the universe with God. Of course, again, it does not mean that God is to be transfused into us, so that we shall be God, part of His very essence. It means just what it says, that God presents the standard towards which we Christian men are to be assimilated. We are to be made like Him, holy as He is holy, pure as He is pure. Our eyes, even in the depths of eternity, will seek Him, towering eternally above us as our unattainable standard towards which we shall ever be ascending, but we shall be like Him; He and we shall belong to one class, the class of holy beings. We shall no longer be like the Devil, whose children we were until we were delivered from his kingdom and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. No more shall we be what we were as men in this world, still separated from God by a gulf of moral difference, a difference so great that we are almost tempted to call it a difference of kind and not merely of degree. Nay, we shall, perhaps, be more like God than even the holy angels are; in our head, Christ Jesus, we shall be in Him who in a pre-eminent sense is like God. The process of the 'filling' may take long; it is but barely begun for most of us in this life; but that is the standard and that the goal—'we shall be filled unto the fullness of God.'

2. For us there are two conditions—emptiness and faith.

(1) *Emptiness.*—For a person to be filled with anything, it is plain that, first of all, he must be emptied of all else. Hence it is absurd for any of us to think of being filled with God's fullness so long as he is under the dominion of any purely earthly or temporal wishes, desires, ambitions, passions, or tastes. The words imply a *totality* of self-surrender to God. In praying to be filled with God the Father's fullness, we pray that all our powers and faculties, and desires, and energies, and likes, and dislikes may be just what they would be if all our merely earthly desires were taken out of us, all that is selfish, and mean, and bad were *emptied* out of us, and the vacant space filled up by a pouring in of the character of God our Father.

I held the golden vessel of my soul
And prayed that God would fill it from on high.
Day after day the importuning cry
Grew stronger—grew, a heaven-accusing dole
Because no sacred waters laved my bowl.
'So full the fountain, Lord, wouldst Thou deny
The little needed for a soul's supply?
I ask but this small portion of Thy whole.'
Then from the vast invisible Somewhere,
A voice, as one love-authorised by Him,
Spake, and the tumult of my heart was stilled.
'Who wants the waters must the bowl prepare;
Pour out the self, that chokes it to the brim,
But emptied vessels, from the source are filled.'[1]

[1] Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *Poems of Experience*, 1.

(2) *Faith.*—'That Christ may dwell in your hearts *through faith.*' Faith is the human means through which the heavenly resources are conveyed. Faith is the attitude of receptiveness. Faith pulls up the blind and lets in the light. Faith opens the window and lets in the air. Faith lifts up the sluice gates, and the water from the higher levels flows into the impoverished channels. God provides the light and the air and the water; we provide the faith, the channel by which His gracious gifts are to be received. Now faith implies fidelity. Faith in a doctor is more than trust; it is also obedience. A disobedient trust is a monstrosity. If therefore we are to manifest faith in Christ, we must take His counsels, His instructions, His commandments, and trustfully begin to obey them. And what will happen? The very beginnings of trustful obedience open all the pores of our being to the enveloping spirit of God. Even now the Spirit is *with* us; by faith He shall be *in* us. By faith our spirit becomes as absorbent as a sponge, we drink in the riches of His grace. We appropriate the means of our salvation.

THE UNIVERSAL FATHERHOOD.

Eph. iii. 14, 15.—'The Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named' (RV).

WE have here a most impressive declaration of the universal Fatherhood of God. In the original there is a subtle play upon words which cannot be brought out in English, for the words *father* and *family* are derived from the same root, and indicate a vital connection. Had the sentence run 'the Creator, from whom every creature in heaven and on earth is named', the meaning would have been plain, for the Creator stands in vital relation to every creature, and from Him every creature derives its name and nature. But what St. Paul says here is that the relation of the Creator to His creatures is a fatherly relation which by its very nature constitutes them His family. Every family, by its name and nature, is a group constituted by the fact that it has a common father, and every group thus constituted runs back ultimately to the Fatherhood of God. If any doubt be felt whether the Apostle's meaning is quite so broad as this, we have only to turn to Eph. iv. 6, where again we read, 'One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.' The Revised Version rightly omits the word 'you,' which is known to be a gloss, and so the true text gives us 'what is certainly the most definite, unequivocal, unmistakable utterance on his theme, outside the Gospels.' [1]

[1] F. Ballard, *Father of All*, 33.

I.

THE FATHER.

The Christian name for God is Father. 'Fatherhood is not one attribute or quality of God among others, but the central controlling attribute, the absolute essence of Godhead, all other attributes being exercised relatively to the ends and purposes of Father-love.' [1] So glibly do we use this name, and so accustomed are we to the thought of the Fatherhood of God, that many would doubtless be astonished to learn that only in recent times has this great truth made its way, not without opposition, to the forefront of Christian thought. It is less than a hundred years since George Canning spoke in the House of Commons about an arresting and haunting phrase which had fallen from the lips of Edward Irving, who in his prayer had spoken of some orphans as being 'thrown upon the Fatherhood of God.' [2] So far as is known, the phrase does not seem to have been previously in use. Still more astonishing it is to read the harsh dogmatic utterance of C. H. Spurgeon, who wrote,

[1] J. M. Shaw, *The Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God*, 65.

[2] W. G. Horder, *The God that Jesus Saw*, 8.

'The doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God is a lie. The prayer beginning "Our Father, which art in heaven," was never meant to be used by everybody; in the mouth of the ungodly it is altogether out of place, for God is not their Father.'[1]

In former times the relation between God and man was conceived in juridic terms. God was the Infinite Sovereign, to whom it was man's chief duty to submit. Sovereignty, rather than Fatherhood, became the controlling doctrine of the Reformed as of the Catholic system. In this system Fatherhood itself was interpreted in the sense of absolute authority. As Zwingli remarks, 'We call God Father, because He can do what He pleases with us.'[2] 'The Anglican communion has thirty-nine articles, with one on oaths, one on the descent into hell, one on the marriage of priests, one on how to avoid people that are excommunicate, and not one on the Fatherhood. The Presbyterian communion has a confession with thirty-three chapters, which deal in a trenchant manner with great mysteries, but there is not one expounding the Fatherhood of God.'[3] Surely it cannot be deemed less than a tragedy that those mysterious and intimate relations between God and the soul should have been expressed so predominatingly in the language of criminal law, with bars, prisoners, sentences; that, in short, the Old Bailey should be reckoned a better school for Christian thought than a father's home.

The impression produced by the teaching of Jesus is far different. Everywhere He sets forth the Fatherhood of God as the clue to all His action, whether in creation or in redemption, whether in grace or in law, in His gifts to man or in His requirements from him. So throughout the New Testament, as Dr. Lidgett has said, 'we find the prevalence of a teaching as to God, Christ, believers, mankind, which would be deprived of all spiritual coherence and reasonableness, unless the universal Fatherhood were at the base of it.'[1] Now this great truth, if accepted, must obviously be held to be central and vital, it must influence all Christian thinking and all Christian living. In particular the whole of theology must be steeped in love, and every thought of God be suffused with tenderness. For while the Divine Fatherhood assumes Sovereignty—and this should never be forgotten—it includes all the love of motherhood. The name 'Father' really stands for parent, and embraces both the fatherly and the motherly elements. The human father has no right to a monopoly of parentage, either in the home or in our idea of God. 'Theodore Parker, the great American preacher, always spoke of God as Father-Mother God.'[2] This tender element in the Fatherhood of God was discerned even by some of the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah says (lxvi. 13), 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you,' and again (xlix. 15), 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.' So Hudson Taylor was expressing the very essence of theology when he said, as he often did, 'Before I had children of my own I used to think, God will not forget me; but when I became a father I learned something more—God *cannot* forget me.'[3]

1. At the same time it cannot be denied that there are great difficulties in the way of a hearty acceptance of the universal Fatherhood. The first is a *practical* difficulty, namely, that this world does not wear the look of a Father's world. Its government seems far too rigid, the operation of its laws far too ruthless to be the expression of a Father's will, while its whole atmosphere, heavy laden with mystery, pain, sorrow, death, and darkened by war and all savagery and strife, is all too little suggestive of the warmth and comfort of a Father's home. The conditions of human life and the present state of the world seem to contradict and make a mockery of the Fatherhood of

[1] F. Ballard, *Father of All*, 28.
[2] A. C. McGiffert, *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, 243.
[3] J. Watson, *The Mind of the Master*, 265.

[1] F. Ballard, *Father of All*, 23.
[2] W. G. Horder, *The God that Jesus Saw*, 6.
[3] *Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission*, 589.

God. 'What signs of paternal government can be found in the martyrdom of man from the first days of history to the last war, in the hideous sufferings of slavery, or in the equal miseries of great cities?'[1] Let all this be fully admitted. Nowhere does it find more passionate utterance than in the Scriptures themselves. Without attempting to deal with this great problem, which will doubtless remain unsolved to the world's end, one suggestion at least may be made, namely, that we are not yet competent to judge. God's government of the world may be a fatherly government, and yet we may be as little able to understand it, to see the wisdom and love of it, as children are to understand the wise and loving government of their home. When the glittering knife is forced from the baby's reluctant hand it must, no doubt, seem a cruel deprivation. Children desire the immediate gratification of every wish as it arises and can see no reason why they should be denied, but it is the mark of a weak and indulgent parent to grant these wishes forthwith. The wise father steadily holds in view his son's whole future and refuses to sacrifice it for the pleasure of the moment. On the contrary, in the interests of that long future, he will impose discipline and call for self-denial and strenuous endeavour. It may be assumed that the wise and loving government of the heavenly Father has regard to man's eternal future, and certainly there is much in the conditions of our present life which points to this world as being a training ground for a higher life to come. We may, therefore, still venture to believe that

> My Father's hand will never cause
> His child a needless tear.

2. The second difficulty is *ethical*. Many have a suspicion that the assertion of God's Fatherhood means the denial of His authority, and implies a doctrine of universal salvation. Undoubtedly the Fatherhood of God has often been preached in such a way as to give ground for this misapprehension. As Dr. Watson says, men 'have invested the "Holy Father" of Jesus, whose Name is "hallowed," with a cloud of sickly sentiment, making Him a God too weak to rule, too soft-hearted to punish. If this conception should obtain, Christianity would deserve to lose her hold on the conscience, and morality would have to fight for very existence. Jesus is not responsible for this helpless Deity, this pitiable descent from the God of the prophets.'[1] It has its root in a low and earthly idea of fatherhood, and grows by the power of human logic rather than the influence of spiritual perception. Just as the old divines were wont to take the Sovereignty of God and deduce from it a whole theology which made God appear as a despot, so there are modern divines and others who take hold of the Fatherhood of God and by the logic of sentimentalism transform it into what has been derisively termed 'the Papahood of God.'

We must beware of being in bondage to any term, however august. The Fatherhood of God is not to be interpreted by our imperfect logic, but by the witness of the gospel. The Father is revealed in the Son, as He Himself said: 'No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' Jesus called God Father, but never in such a way as to impugn His Sovereignty, or becloud His Holiness, or diminish that awe and reverence with which men ought to worship Him. 'With Jesus, the Father was Lord of heaven and earth, who "seeth in secret," and holds the times in His hand, who has not only prepared the "many mansions," but also the cleansing fires of Gehenna. No judge is so omniscient as a father, no despot so absolute. The Father of the Sermon on the Mount is not less awful than the God of the Ten Words, nor is the conscience of St. John less strenuous than the conscience of Moses.'[2] Jesus called God Father, and held fast by that great name in the face of all the miseries and sufferings of life, yea at the very moment when He was bearing upon His single soul all the burden of the world's sin. Moreover He *interpreted* the name of Father and not

[1] J. Watson, *The Mind of the Master*, 268.

[1] *The Mind of the Master*, 267.
[2] J. Watson, *The Mind of the Master*, 267-8.

merely *proclaimed* it. So that we are not thrown back upon our own imperfect ideas of fatherhood, but have received in the Divine Sonship a key to unlock the meaning of the Divine Fatherhood. Hence, as Ritschl pointed out, the distinctive New Testament name for God is 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'[1]

II.

THE FAMILY.

It is natural, and also Scriptural, in thinking of the family of God, to think only of 'the household of faith,' the company of the redeemed who are 'in Christ.' That they constitute in a peculiar sense the family of God is beyond dispute. But when St. Paul speaks of 'every family in heaven and on earth' it is obvious that he has something far wider in view. How much is implied in this has been made matter of dispute. In particular the question has been raised as to who are entitled to be called sons of God. On the one hand it has been argued that all men are sons of God, on the ground that the universal Fatherhood necessarily involves a universal sonship. On the other hand it has been strenuously maintained that this view is not only unscriptural but morally confusing and harmful, inasmuch as it negatives the new birth, leads to the obscuring of the distinction between the believer and the unbeliever, and tends to dull the sense of the supreme privilege of the Christian.

Perhaps it may be helpful to look at the matter in this way. Fatherhood is more than Creatorship. Its essence is self-reproduction. God stands to all created beings in the relation of Creator, but He holds the relation of a Father only in so far as these created beings reproduce His nature, or are made in His image. Now it is manifest that created beings reproduce the nature of God in widely various degrees. At the lowest, all things that exist share the Divine attribute of existence. To a higher grade of beings God has given the attribute of life, and in respect of that attribute these beings partake somewhat more of the nature of God, who is a 'living God.' Higher and more Godlike is man, to whom has been given the dignity of self-conscious life, and who alone of God's creatures is declared to be 'made in the image of God.' It cannot be denied that God is reproduced in the spirituality, rationality and moral capacity of man, so that here we see Creatorship merging into Fatherhood. Yet in so far as man's spiritual nature is undeveloped or perverted he does not truly reproduce the Father, and to that extent is no true son. Perfect goodness is of the very essence of the Divine Fatherhood, and must find expression in all His sons. Only once in history has the Father declared, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'

If, then, the question be pressed, Who is entitled to be called a son of God? it would be proper to make answer that God has but one Son, who is therefore called 'the only begotten.' No other can claim sonship in his own right but they who are 'born again' and receive the spirit of the Son into their hearts, to them He gives the 'right to become sons of God.' This is undoubtedly the usage of the New Testament. 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God' (Rom. viii. 14). When, however, we proceed beyond this circle and endeavour to express God's fatherly relation to all mankind, it becomes matter for grave consideration what terms will best express that relation in all its glorious possibilities and in all its woeful incompleteness. Is it best to say outright that man is a son of God, or to say that he 'has the capacity of sonship,' or that he is a 'lost son'? A recent writer[1] has suggested that the natural relation should be expressed by the term 'childship' as distinct from sonship, but the name 'child of God' seems more fragrant with the intimacy of faith than the name 'son of God.' As long as the essence of the truth is preserved there need be no quarrel over names. Perhaps the

[1] D. S. Cairns, *Christianity in the Modern World*, 44.

[1] J. M. Shaw, *The Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God*, 169.

matter cannot be better expressed than in the forcible paradox of Wendt, 'God is the loving Father of all men, nevertheless men must become sons of the Father'; 'God does not become the Father even of those who become His sons.' [1]

The universal Fatherhood implies a universal realm of love. What innumerable ranks and families of created beings will ultimately find a place in that realm we cannot tell. Too often it seems to be taken for granted that all this wonderful world of Nature will be simply scrapped, and nothing left but what is spiritual. That idea is of Greek rather than Christian origin. But what concerns us chiefly is that in this great family of God, this universal realm of love, man has the glorious opportunity of attaining to sonship in the fullest sense, but, if he fail of that high destiny, the resulting loss will be unspeakable and the doom eternal.

III.

THE FAMILY SPIRIT.

The family is united by a spiritual bond, and for its well-being, indeed for its very being, it is essential that it should be permeated by the family spirit. The universal Fatherhood becomes the basis of a most powerful and moving appeal for the prevalence of the family spirit.

1. *The Call of Home.*—There is a deep instinct in the human soul that its home is in God. This has been dimly felt from the earliest ages, but now that the Father is fully revealed in Christ the gospel becomes a clear, urgent, winsome call to the erring children of God to come home. This is how Jesus Himself pictured it in the greatest of all the gospel parables. It was the call of home that lured the Prodigal from the far country. 'I will arise,' he said, 'and go to my Father.' This has ever been the appeal that reached men's hearts. The old divines preached it. However they might speak about guilty sinners at the bar of an angry Judge, they did not conceal the grace of the Redeemer and they gave assurance to the vilest sinner of a welcome home. But now that the Fatherhood of God has come to the forefront in Christian thought, and shines out clear as the noonday sun over the whole wide world, it provides a new leverage for the gospel. Now the preacher can press home the message,

> Return, O wanderer, to thy home,
> Thy Father calls for thee.

Let but a true view of the Fatherhood of God sink into men's minds and it will increasingly be felt to be a base and shameful thing to live regardless of it or to stray away. To every soul with even the faintest instinct of sonship there must surely be irresistible force in the appeal to respond to the Father's love, to return to the bosom of the family, to breathe the air of home, and live in the family spirit.

2. *The Spirit of Sonship.*—The family spirit is, in reference to the Father, a spirit of sonship. The due response to fatherly love is filial trust. This was the attitude of Jesus to His heavenly Father, and He summoned and encouraged all men to share in it. He declared that the Father had a right to be trusted and that such trust was the high privilege of all His children. He kept continually saying to men, 'Trust the Father, rely upon His goodness, cast every care upon Him for He careth for you, pray to Him for He knows all your needs and will never refuse any good thing.' To attain this spirit of sonship is the very pathway of salvation; it is reconciliation and life and peace. It emancipates from slavish fear. 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Father.' It implies community of feeling with the Father, tender sensibility to His will, sympathy with His purposes, ready obedience to His commands, and a free, loving and joyful abandonment of surrender.

3. *The Spirit of Brotherhood.*—The family spirit also expresses itself in brotherhood.

[1] D. S. Cairns, *Christianity in the Modern World*, 57.

Universal Fatherhood carries with it the obligation of universal brotherhood. If there be one Father of all, then are we all kin. We speak of 'mankind,' and that word really contains a declaration of the 'kinship' which exists between all the members of the human family, and every time we use it we do in fact declare our faith in the universal Fatherhood. Now *kinship* implies *kindness,* for both words are from the same root. 'We speak of a "kind" person, and we speak of "mankind," and perhaps, if we think about the matter at all, we seem to ourselves to be using quite different words, or the same words in senses quite unconnected. But they are connected, and that by closest bonds; a "kind" person is a "kinned" person, one of kin; one who acknowledges and acts upon his kinship with other men, confesses that he owes to them, as of one blood with himself, the debt of love.'[1] Such was the spirit of St. Paul, who owned himself 'debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise' (Rom. i. 14).

This is the very spirit of Christ, the very mainspring of all Christian enterprise. 'Knowing as I do,' said Quintin Hogg, 'what God's Fatherhood is to my own life, my whole heart goes out with infinite pity towards those whose lives are unblessed by what is to me the very pole-star of my existence. I cannot bear to think of some stumbling blindfold through the pitfalls of life while my hand is clasped by a never-failing Guide; or of others who look forward to the end of their earthly life with dread and trembling while I see only the outspread arms of the everlasting Father and the welcome of a life-long Friend.'[2] It is said of Canon Barnett that in his parish work, 'behind each cog of the machinery was a living principle, regulated by the flywheel of passionate desire that men should know they are "brothers and loved children of God."'[3]

Is not the world perishing for lack of the spirit of brotherhood? What are all wars, national and racial enmities, industrial strifes, social inequalities but dreadful proofs of this? Poets have sung of a coming age of brotherhood, have been very confident that 'Come it will, for a' that.' But how shall the spirit of brotherhood be born in men? The only dynamic would seem to lie in the one great Fatherhood which, really accepted, issues, and must issue, in a real Brotherhood of Men. The hope of the world lies in this, that it is the Father's design to make love prevail, to transfuse throughout every family in heaven and on earth the spirit of brotherhood, and thereby redeem the world from all unrighteousness. Surely the heart of every loyal son of God must thrill in response to this high hope, must be filled at the prospect with courageous trust and adoring love, and be stirred up afresh to work and to pray that the Kingdom may come and the Father's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

J. H. Morrison.

[1] R. C. Trench, *Study of Words*, 47.
[2] *Life*, 310.
[3] *Life*, i. 75.

The Riches of God's Glory.

Eph. iii. 16.—'According to the riches of his glory.'

St. Paul is the Apostle of superlatives. All his writing is marked by an exuberant and irrepressible energy. Is there any writer in any literature or in any age whose mind works with such amazing passion and whose speech flashes with such a brilliance of spiritual insight? The world's lovers, and mystics, and poets are like larks carolling in the heavens. This man is like some great mythical bird that rises on mightier wing and sings a vaster song. There are passages in the Epistles, it is true, which are dull and involved, poor Rabbinical stuff that is merely tedious. And that stratum shows us how the Apostle might have written if he had remained a Rabbi. When we compare his highest with his lowest, the difference amounts to nothing less than a literary miracle. What mysterious hand is this that strikes the strings? What new and magnificent theme sweeps through his soul and leaves him rapt in the glory of deathless

inspiration? The hand that strikes the strings is Christ's; the theme is all of the grace and glory of God.

Listen, then, to some of the Apostle's exclamations! Listen to some of his superlatives! What does the Apostle see in God, that he speaks of 'the riches of his glory?' If he wants to speak of the Love of Christ, he is not satisfied unless he draws out its dimensions, he speaks of the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of the love that passeth knowledge. His prayer is, 'that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.' His benediction is, 'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.' This is but a roughly gathered handful of his superlatives, and it may suffice as a specimen of his tone as soon as he speaks of God in Jesus Christ. Like one who watches the dawn among the mountains, and finds that its glory far supersedes his highest anticipations, the Apostle watches the unfolding of the spiritual world, as peak after peak of spiritual truth is aflame in the light; dark and portentous mysteries are empurpled with splendour, the common plain of experience lies bathed in beauty, and his language, rich as it seems to us, to him is all too poor.

How may we get his point of view? The panorama was not for him alone; how can we come to the platform from which, with such rapture, he gazed out upon the inexhaustible wealth of the heart and mind of God?

1. Nature helps us. In spring the world renews its ancient rapture. Not all the memory of former springs would enable us to imagine anything like the wealth, the colour and life that each new spring brings. We need the mood of spring through which we can see the spring. The same power touches heart and tree. It is the spring within which enables us to rejoice in the spring outside. So that when it comes, it comes upon us as a surprise. It comes up out of the winter. It breathes through the forest, and a shimmer of green hovers about the boughs. If that were all it would be beautiful enough for a generation. But a little later the orchards are out. It is beautiful enough for a lifetime. And when you think you have it all, the later growths of the elms and oaks come on, the warm showers add luxury to luxury untold. Every day we are surprised into appreciation. So it is when the rainbow is flung across the cloud. As the most truthful of all poets said—

> My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky.

That is exactly what the heart does—it leaps up. But the spring is not merely one surprise; it is a continual variety of surprises. New wealth crushes through into that which is already displayed. The power behind is inexhaustible. There is no end to it. Whatever you take, its beauty, its variety, its lines and form and colour, its utility, its order, its timeliness, the unity of all its diversity, you feel the push of a vital force that is literally prodigal in its out-working. You feel that at the back of things there is something to which nothing is impossible; no miracle, no wonder is beyond its scope.

We pass from Nature to Nature's God. But my question to my own heart is this: Do I pass to a God who is as great, as majestic, as beautiful, as mighty as all this? Do I posit an artist adequate to this art? A craftsman so skilful as to have wrought so well? Do I realize a wealth of wisdom in the Creator-mind, and an eternity of long-designing care in the Father's heart? Or do I keep the two apart—the world so rich while my thought of God remains so poor. That is what Blake was at when he wrote about the tiger. The tiger was so wonderful that he could not stop at that alone. He wanted to think what mysterious hand had made the wonderful brute.

> Tiger, Tiger, burning bright
> In the forests of the night,
> What immortal hand or eye
> Could frame thy fearful symmetry?
>
> In what distant deeps or skies
> Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
> On what wings dare he aspire?
> What the hand dare seize the fire?

No, the mind cannot stop at what it sees. It must wander on to what must be behind, to the Immortal Hand and Eye that made it and saw that it was good. It is all out of the wonder of that indescribable Being. It is part of the fullness of God, the depth and riches of His wisdom and love.

2. Can we stop there when we have felt the power that works so wonderfully in the realms of physical, natural, and vegetable life? Must we leave the moral and spiritual realms as out of His department. Why, the departments are already bridged: It is by an æsthetic feeling that we appreciate it all. It is by an intellectual effort that we understand what we do understand. It is a religious feeling that has made these inferences as to the Being upon which all this and ourselves depend. The moral and spiritual life, therefore, are His department. And in this realm of the spirit also we see the glory coming through. Like the spring, it has the same surprise power, because it also is beyond our unaided imagination; and, like the spring, it sets us wondering at the inexhaustible wealth of life behind. Just as we watch the glory of God breaking through upon the natural world in the splendour of May mornings, so perhaps we shall best appreciate it as a spiritual force when first we see it emerging in the life of the soul.

That was the platform from which Paul watched it coming through. He had gone out into those great heathen cities which were like a wintry wood waiting for warmer suns. And wherever he passed, the woods were awake and men's hearts learned a new song. Every day proved more fully the truth of which his own experience was the earnest, that a spiritual and moral force was abroad, streaming forth from God, and mighty to save. He grew sure that it could change the face of history as wonderfully as the spring could change the face of a landscape. And he could not stop with what he saw. He must think behind it, think into the heart of God and imagine the untold wealth of love, the inexhaustible moral energy of His grace. We, too, can see the same beginnings wherever we see a soul awakening, a character developing, ancient nations turning from their idolatry and crying out for a fuller and richer faith. As we watch the beginnings, like Paul our minds are drawn on to revel in the eternal and immeasurable spiritual life pressing through into the human life. There is nothing it cannot do if we give it a chance. It is the springtime of the soul, and out and beyond every truth and every virtue that has opened out into loveliness is the untold and incalculable wealth of the life and beauty of God.

3. Once again, the surprise power of beginnings and the wonder of what is behind is part of the eternal fascination of the Cross. Just as the rainbow flung across the frowning storm makes the heart leap up when first we see it, so to see upreared above the tragedy of man's sin and rebellion the sign that God is concerned in it, would suffer in it, would abate nothing of His holy demands for it, is a new view of God, opening up undreamed-of possibilities. Men had thought of God as holy before, but never like this. The holiness was a white light far removed, but this comes down, and as it shoots through the mists of human sins it unfolds all the spectrum of its glory. However we may reason about it, the fact is that it is there at the Cross that man's deepest worship has been given. It is through Christ, in His living and His dying, that men have looked into the wonders of the nature of God and have cried, 'What God is this? What a wonder of love is this.'[1]

¶ The Cross shows me God clothing Himself with humility. He bends to the sharpest sorrow and the darkest shame. And whereas my proud spirit would only rebel against a King all majestic, all happy, all untouched by poverty and disgrace and grief, I am subdued and vanquished by One who comes to me in so lowly a guise. The Sufferer and Saviour triumphs where the Sovereign must have failed.

And the Cross shows me God meeting and discharging the demands of law. The Divine law, so holy, so good, hates my sin, and has

[1] G. E. Darlaston.

righteously condemned me to die because of it. I cannot answer my accuser for one out of a thousand of my transgressions. But in my place the Lord, whose mouthpiece the law is, fulfils its commands and bears its penalty. This is all I need. This fetters me in glad bondage to my Redeemer.

And the Cross shows me God loving without measure or stint. Many waters cannot quench His love; the floods cannot drown it. He knows from the beginning the bitter and dreadful end, the agony and the desolation; and yet He cares for me so passionately and so prevailingly that He sets His face steadfastly towards this end. My heart of stone is melted thus, and I am led in willing captivity.[1]

Spiritual Power.

Eph. iii. 16.—'Strengthened with power through his Spirit.'

How often does St. Paul in this Epistle speak of spiritual power? He is so full of the thought that it emerges in every few verses. 'That ye may know the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ' (i. 19, 20). 'The gospel, whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power' (iii. 7). Again in our text; and finally the doxology: 'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen' (iii. 20, 21). After ages of moral inability, and all the sadness that goes with it, the Apostle has suddenly come to the knowledge of victorious strength in Christ and is intoxicated with the thought. The believer 'can do all things,' do them with facility and with triumph. As supreme genius paints and sings and declaims with absolute mastery and joy, so henceforth in Christ Jesus shall the saints reach and maintain the character of blameless purity with ineffable delight. How beautiful, serene, and satisfying does life become when Christ's strength is perfected in our weakness, when the risings of pride, selfishness, impurity, and every irregular desire are habitually suppressed, and we freely keep the law in its length and breadth.

We no sooner desire to obey the higher law, to live the better life, to satisfy the ideal of the soul, than we become aware of a dark and obstinate element within us contradicting our aspirations. Revelation has done immense service in dragging this obnoxious power into the light and making known to us its inmost nature. It is made known to us as the law of sin that works in our members like a leaven, blinding, debasing, blighting, cursing our whole being and existence; and it is in the power of the Holy Spirit alone that we can hope for its expulsion. We have only to mark two features of this fatal principle to be conscious of this, namely, its spirituality and its strength.

1. We do not approach a true conception of the nature of sin until we recognize its spirituality. We must cease to confound it with any motions of the body, any defects of matter, or with any traits of animalism, and find its secret in the defiled conscience, the perverted reason, the misplaced affections, the infirm will. It must be convicted in its essence and source, and not confused with vehicle or instruments. It is the 'carnal mind,' yet mind; the 'flesh,' yet 'the mind of the flesh.' It must be resolved into what at first and last it is—a question of self-will setting at defiance the universal and eternal law. Our Lord gave the true and highest example when 'he pleased not himself'; and sin lies in the contrary decision, to please ourselves in contradiction to the cosmic law, and to Him in whom the universe holds together. All treatment of sin is ineffectual that does not get to its root in the human soul. Only in a secondary sense do we war against flesh and blood; in the primary sense we contend

[1] A. Smellie.

with the spirit of darkness, with the 'sin that dwelleth in us.'

Here, then, the Spirit of grace becomes our availing strength. 'That ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man.' 'Into the inner man.' As Moule notes, 'No surface work here.' The Spirit is to reach our central life, penetrating to the depths of manhood, and our strength and hope are to be in this inworking power of grace. Christ by the Spirit is to 'dwell in our heart'; ruling at the very fountain of thought, emotion, volition, action; mind against mind, will against will, spirit against spirit; the omnipotent mind, will, spirit, coming to the rescue of our spiritual life, taking up all the place, assuming the absolute sovereignty, expelling every proud, unruly, impure thought, passion, and delight.

2. The strength of sin is another feature giving us grave concern, and one to be effectually withstood only in the power of the Spirit of God. How completely sin masters men, making its victims veritable bond-slaves of the devil! How it persists! We remember hearing a man say that on visiting his father's farm after an absence of sixty years he found the thistles flourishing on the same spots they occupied when he was a boy. Is it not too often the same with our moral infirmities and faults—we resent and deplore them, yet they survive, they strengthen with the years? The covetous hold their gold with a still firmer grip when their hand has become too feeble to hold anything else. The intemperate, suffering what cannot be told, stammer, 'I will seek it yet again.' The wrathful are ashamed of their temper, and yet their last sun goes down on their wrath. So with pride, envy, vanity, and all the vices. Every abortive struggle with evil passion seems to leave it only more rooted and vigorous. We clearly discern the rebellious principle entrenched in our humanity, yet are pathetically incapable of dislodging it. The X-rays may reveal within our body a foreign, poisonous substance which, however, cannot be removed; so we discern in our mind, more clearly than the surgeon perceives the bullet in our bones, a fatal element we are powerless to expel. It has become so intermingled with our nature, so deep, subtle, and stubborn, that it would appear possible for death alone to deliver us.

Here again, then, we see the necessity for the Spirit's action, the action promised in our text. 'For this cause I bow my knees.' 'I pray to God to give you strength within,' infused strength. The central idea of the whole passage is strength; the strengthening of the whole inner man. 'Strengthened with power through his Spirit.' 'The strength of sin' is countered by the strength of Omnipotent redeeming grace.[1]

¶ We are told that the family crest of the great metaphysical poet, Johne Donne, a crest which he himself sported in his earlier days, was a sheaf of snakes. And this symbolised well the brood of temptations that twisted and turned in his bosom in his youth, and which in some of his poetry he so graphically, and almost revoltingly describes. But to him there came a great change. Suddenly the power of the external overshadowed him. Suddenly he came to experience the expulsive power of a new affection. The mercy and the might of Jesus Christ delivered him from a guilty past and a sin-ridden nature. Then he replaced his old crest with a new one. He cancelled the sheaf of snakes, and in its stead he put Christ crucified, Christ crucified against the background of an anchor.[2]

Christ in the Heart.

Eph. iii. 17.—'That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.'

THE prayer that the Apostle presents here, on behalf of his Ephesian friends, is that Christ may dwell in their hearts. 'In your hearts.' In the central region of the moral life; he means that region in which thought springs up; in the region of affection and desire; in the region of motives; in the

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Shepherd of the Sea*, 96ff.

[2] D. C. Mitchell, *The Nonsense of Neutrality*, 19.

region in which purposes are formed, in which future actions have their birth; in the region of love, joy, sorrow, hope, trust, aspiration.

1. The conception is not a difficult one to lay hold of; we are helped to it by passages similar to this, scattered all through the New Testament. The Apostle Paul in one place says, writing to his friends, 'I have you in my heart.' He says again, writing to others, 'Ye are in my heart.' We have no difficulty in understanding what he means when he says that.

¶ Take a case from ordinary life. A widowed mother lives in a cottage by the sea; her only boy is a sailor; for years he has been far away sailing from land to land, and she has not set her eyes on him; but her heart is full of him; she thinks of him by day, she dreams of him by night. How tenderly she handles every relic that he left behind him when he went away; how the glass in her spectacles grows dim as she reads his letters; his name is never missed out from her prayers; and many a time when she is busy about her daily work the thought of her boy will flash into her heart like a beam of golden sunlight. The stars speak about him, the winds speak about him, the waves speak about him, and so does every white-sailed ship away out on the sea. Nobody has any difficulty in understanding what is meant when it is said that her boy dwells in her heart.[1]

2. True religion begins when Christ is welcomed into a human heart; and true religion consists very largely in Christ abiding and ruling in the heart into which He is welcomed.

(1) The most that can be said, perhaps, of some is that their Christ is in their creed. His name occurs in the creed that they subscribe to, but that name is no more to them than the name of some dead man that occurs in the title-deeds by which they hold some piece of property; He is in their creed, but nowhere else. Paul does not make it his prayer that Christ may dwell on the lips of his Ephesian friends, and yet Christ dwells much more on the lips of men than in their hearts; especially in our own times, when the whole civilized world is called Christian. In how many lands, and in how many languages, and by what millions of lips the name of Christ is now pronounced. Throughout England and Europe and America, and many a country beside, children are taught His name from their earliest years, and almost all their favourite hymns bring the name of Christ upon their lips. In this sense truly His name is above every name. So it happens with generation after generation. Christ is on their lips in sunny childhood, in eager youth, in busy maturity, and in failing old age, and, in the case of very many, the music of His name refreshes their souls in death. It is very becoming, very beautiful that it should be so. As we remember how constantly we repeat His holy name, and that, in this respect, we resemble ten thousand congregations assembling every Sabbath over the world, it seems as if a great step had been taken towards realizing the prediction, 'To him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess.' An angel approaching the earth for the first time, who heard the music of these unceasing songs ascending in Christ's praise, might fancy that already 'the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.' Yet Paul does *not* pray that Christ may dwell on the lips of His converts.

(2) The most that may be said, perhaps, of some other men is that they have Christ in their heads. They possess a kind of abstract knowledge of Him; they can reason and dispute about Him, but the living Christ Himself is absolutely nothing to them; He has never entered in among their affections and their joys; He has never become a welcome Guest in their bosom; He has never made them glad.

A man who studies mathematics much has his brain adapt itself to mathematical ideas, which, therefore, become increasingly easy to him. So with every other subject; and so with Christianity and Christ. If we have received a Christian training, if we have

[1] J. Culross.

been accustomed to attend Christian worship till the name of Jesus is most familiar to our ears, then Christ is lodged in our brain; our brain has grown to the thoughts of Christ; there are channels formed there which correspond to Him and His teaching. The readiness with which we can all enter into Christian ideas and services is evidence that our brains have grown to the very thought of Christ. Yet Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is not even for the great boon that Christ might dwell in their minds or brains. With a true instinct he fixes on something else, and prays that Christ may dwell in their hearts.

Now God forbid that Faith be blind assent,
Grasping what others know; else Faith were nought
But learning, as of some far continent
Which others sought,
And carried thence, better the tale to teach,
Pebbles and shells, poor fragments of the beach.

Nay, but with Faith I sought my Lord last night,
And found Him shining where the lamp was dim;
The shadowy altar glimmered, height on height,
A throne for Him:
Seen as through lattice work His gracious Face
Looked forth on me and filled the dark with grace.

Nay then, if proof and tortured argument
Content thee—teach thee that the Lord is there,
Or risen again; I pray thee be content,
But leave me here
With eye unsealed by any proof of thine,
With eye unsealed to know the Lord is mine.[1]

[1] R. H. Benson.

The Worth of Christ's Indwelling.

Eph. iii. 17.—'That Christ may dwell in your hearts.'

When Christ comes into a heart to dwell He does not come alone; He comes and brings with Him all those things that accompany salvation.

1. When Christ dwells in the human heart, *He dwells there as a living power,* moving, renewing, sanctifying, moulding us according to His own idea, working His own pleasure in us, making men faithful in their daily business, strong for their daily service, for labour, for suffering, for sorrow, for waiting, for whatever Providence may appoint. He dwells in the heart as a power fortifying against the temptations that beset men, the temptations to meanness, to untruthfulness, to selfishness; as a power subduing evil desires and propensities, calming all unholy thoughts and desires. Just as on that stormy night on the Sea of Galilee He said to the winds and waves, 'Peace, be still,' so He calms distractions and tumults in the breast into which He enters. He is in us as a living power, strengthening us for the heavenly Father's will, forming in us a character of nobleness and truth, lifting up our life above its old levels, enabling us to fight the good fight of faith, making us more than conquerors through His own life. The Apostle Paul understood this matter when he said, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' That is one thing that comes about when Christ abides by faith in a human heart; we find a new power within us against evil, and *for* truth and righteousness.

¶ When the Hellgate Bridge was being built over the East River at New York, the engineers came upon an old derelict ship, lying embedded in the river mud, just where one of the central piers of the bridge was to go down through to its bedrock foundation. No tugboat could be found that was able to start the derelict from its ancient bed in the ooze. . . . Finally, with a sudden inspiration, one of the

workers hit upon this scheme. He took a large, flat boat, which had been used to bring stone down the river, and he chained it to the old sunken ship when the tide was low. Then he waited for the great tidal energies to do their work. Slowly the rising tide, with all the forces of the ocean behind it, came up under the flat boat, raising it inch by inch. And as it came up, lifted by irresistible power, the derelict came up with it, until it was entirely out of the mud that had held it.[1]

2. When Christ enters a human heart *He brings His own love,* and that, consciously received, produces a corresponding and answering love in our hearts to Him. Where Christ abides in a man's heart, love will be the very soil in which his life will be rooted and grow. That love will be the motive of all service, it will underlie as the productive cause all fruitfulness. All goodness and all beauty will be its fruit. The whole life will be as a tree planted in this rich soil. And so the life will grow, not by effort only, but as by an inherent power drawing its nourishment from the soil. This is blessedness. It is heaven upon earth that love should be the soil in which our obedience is rooted, and from which we draw all the nutriment that turns to flowers and fruit. Where Christ dwells in the heart, love will be the foundation upon which our lives are builded steadfast and sure. The blessed consciousness of His love, and the joyful answer of the heart to it, may become the basis upon which the whole being shall repose, the underlying thought that gives security, serenity, steadfastness to an else fluctuating life.

¶ Far above all other motives was his love to Christ. That was the root of his life, and the life of all his effort. It was a conscious, personal, realised devotion. It was too hallowed a feeling for him to speak much of. It coloured and pervaded every thought; was an unceasing presence with him; lay at the foundation of every endeavour, and was brought to bear on every action in life, on every book he read, and almost on every word he spoke.[1]

3. Then again, when Christ enters a human heart to dwell there, *He enters it and abides as an undying joy.* No sooner does Christ enter than joy begins. His presence removes those old dreads and disquietudes of conscience that were occasioned by the sense of guilt, and He sheds abroad within us a sense of reconcilement to God, and an assurance of Almighty keeping that gladdens. The joy is, to a very large extent, independent of temporal surroundings; it certainly does not need a man basking in the sunshine of worldly prosperity to find that Christ is joy to him. Outside there may be poverty, the chill east wind, the weary way of the wilderness, a dull, gloomy sky, dislike, even contempt, from men; but within—if Christ rules within—there is a quiet gladness. For when Christ enters, He enters whose presence makes men glad, and with Him come in pure thoughts, high desires, regulations of holy life, a peace that in very deed passeth all understanding.

And it is a strange thing, too, that when Christ is in the heart, He somehow throws radiance over all that is round about us, He brings light and beauty and gladness. We all know that we make the world in which we dwell. Suppose a man goes out to business in the morning, full of hope, and comes back a few hours later disappointed; what a gloom rests on all around about him. And yet the outward scene is the same in the coming back as in the going away; the difference is in the man's mood. We *make* the world in which we dwell. And so with Christ ruling in us, the lowliest earthly dwelling becomes a kind of waiting-room to the palace of glory. Sorrow is transfigured to the heart that holds Him in it. The bounties of Providence all come to us with sweeter relish; the commonest cup of earthly comfort has a truly celestial flavour in it; the most ordinary sights, that seem commonplace or even worn out, are invested with a new charm; the starry magnificence of night has a loftier and calmer grandeur about

[1] Angus Jones.

[1] S. A. Brooke, *Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson,* 164.

it; and the very heavens seem to bend more sheltering and more graciously over us.

¶ The experience of one who has his heart dwelling with Christ will be rich with jubilant music. The life which our Lord communicates is His own exalted life: and that is in its essence 'love, joy, empire, victory.' To quote the words of a great living theologian: 'Christianity has been named the Religion of Sorrow; but there never was a more complete misnomer. It is not the religion of sorrow, but the religion which, because it is inspired by One who lives and *was* dead, gives the victory over every sorrow, even the crowning sorrows of death and sin. There is not in the New Testament from beginning to end, in the record of the original and genuine Christian life, a single word of despondency or gloom. It is the most buoyant, exhilarating, and joyful book in the world.' [1]

The Communion of Saints.

Eph. iii. 18.—'With all the saints.'

The great Apostle bowed his knees in prayer to the Father for a well-beloved Church, that she might be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that she might be filled unto all the fulness of God. Did ever so sane a man cherish an ambition so wild—'filled unto all the fulness of God'? Yet this ambition is not the extravagance of an over-wrought enthusiasm. The end is soberly set, and the means are adequate, because chosen in full view of the magnificence of the end. So noble a purpose demands for its fulfilment nothing less than all the spiritual force available; it may be accomplished only *with all the saints*. The heart leaps as the vision unfolds of the splendour of the destiny to which we are summoned, and of the goodly fellowship which presses on with us towards the mark, and heartens us on the way by its strength, its experience, and its sympathy.

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 206.

1. The fellowship of the saints is larger than either our experience or our imagination of it. That fellowship knows no denomination: it includes all who aspire to apprehend the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Every saint needs every other, needs especially to supplement his own experience by experiences with which he is unfamiliar. His robust and practical piety may have to be softened into gentler lines of beauty by the unobtrusive grace more natural, perhaps, to another Church than to his own. The saint who dreams away his days in devout contemplation of the things above may have to learn from the saints of another Church that visions are for life, and gifts for service. We are debtors unto all the saints, especially unto those from whom we differ.

Every Church has had her saints, and every epoch. It is for us to let them instruct and chasten us, counting nothing common or unclean. Our life will be the richer when we know the story of their struggles, our fortitude will be encouraged by the sight of their fidelity, our wisdom will be matured by the study of their meditations. All the saints belong to the whole Church of Christ; and that man robs himself of his inheritance who allows denominational jealousies or fears to govern the range of his sympathies. The streets of the city of God are exceeding broad. On them is room for the reconciliation of ancient enmities. Roman, Greek; Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian; Rahab, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, Ethopia: Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God!

2. But Paul speaks of *all* the saints, and some have 'gone before.' We all make up one family, though we sadly lose sight of this great truth. We forget, or almost forget, that large part of our family which is absent from us; it is out of sight, and therefore out of mind. But surely it ought not to be out of mind; we do not forget our friends who have left us to go to some distant country in this world; their very absence from us helps to bring them before our minds. And why, then, should we

not recall to our minds those who have left us for the next world? Some of them were our dearest friends here; and why should they not continue to be as dear to us as ever? When they went away they did not cease to be, any more than our friends cease to be who have left us for a foreign land.

It is quite true that we know but little of the present state of those who have gone from us into the next world; we can scarcely conceive of the soul as it exists apart from the body, in the intermediate stage between death and the resurrection. Still, we know for certain that it does exist, and in such expressions as those of the Apostle, 'sleeping in Jesus,' and 'present with the Lord,' we have quite enough to satisfy us. If our departed friends are with the Lord, they are in the best possible keeping; they are, we may be quite sure, in a state of rest and peace far beyond anything that this world could give them. And if their being with the Lord is a sure pledge to us of their being happy, so also it is a pledge to us of their being one with ourselves: if we ourselves are in the Lord, we must be one with all those who are in Him. He is the true centre round which the whole family on earth and in heaven is gathered; and the closer we draw to Him, the closer we draw to all those who are resting in Him, as well as to all those who are living and working along with us here.

¶ It is interesting to note with what tenacity even thinkers who practically reject the Divine origin of Christianity cling to the conception of personal continuity. Renan, the uncompromising but reverent-minded sceptic, dedicates his celebrated work, the *Vie de Jésus* to the memory of his sister, and invokes her pure soul to reveal to him, from the bosom of God in which she rests, those truths which are mightier than the grave, and take away the fear of death.

The Catholic doctrine of the Communion of Saints, which in its universal aspect is the unity of all life with the Divine, meets this instinct, and satisfies it with a revelation. The instinct cries—

Can a finite thing, created in the bounds of time and space,
Can it live and grow and love Thee, catch the glory of Thy face,
Fade and die, be gone for ever, know no being, have no place?

Revelation answers, 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him.' 'This mortal must put on immortality.' 'Ye are come into an innumerable company of the spirits of just men made perfect.'

Lord, make me one with Thine own faithful ones,
Thy Saints who love Thee and are loved by Thee;
Till the day break and till the shadows flee,
At one with them in alms and orisons;
At one with him who toils and him who runs,
And him who yearns for union yet to be;
At one with all who throng the crystal sea
And wait the setting of our moons and suns.
Ah, my beloved ones gone on before,
Who looked not back with hand upon the plough!
If beautiful to me while still in sight,
How beautiful must be your aspects now;
Your unknown, well-known aspects in that light
Which clouds shall never cloud for evermore.[1]

The Perfect Cube.

Eph. iii. 18.—'The breadth, and length, and depth, and height.'

THE perfect cube is the very figure of extent and solidity. The heavenly city (Rev. xxi. 16) lieth four-square, and the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. But the love of Christ can be measured four ways.

1. *The breadth of Christ's love.*—By the breadth of the love of Christ we may understand that there is no limit to it in space; that it embraces all worlds and all creatures,

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

that the invisible Power which has called all things into being, upon which all depend, is the Power of Love. We feel it in the glory of the universe, the beauty of the world, in the pathos as well as the joy of life, in the tenderness of friendship. It thrills in music, it flows in light, it throbs in every pulse. From this love so wide, so full, so free, none are or can be excluded;

> For the love of God is broader
> Than the measures of man's mind;
> And the heart of the Eternal
> Is most wonderfully kind.

The Jew cannot say 'I am cast away,' for at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. The Gentile cannot say 'I am excluded' while it is written 'also to the Greek.' The rich; Christ did not say he could not enter into the Kingdom, but only that it was hard. The poor are chosen rich in faith. The child; Christ said, 'Of such is the kingdom of Heaven.' And the old man looking back on a life of impenitence, Christ calls even at the eleventh hour.

¶ This broad love, universal as humanity, and deep as it is broad, is universal because it is individual. You and I have to generalize, as we say, when we try to extend our affections beyond the limits of household and family and personal friends, and the generalizing is a sign of weakness and limitation. Nobody can love an abstraction, but Christ's love does not proceed in that fashion. He individualizes, loving each and therefore loving all. It is because every man has a space in his heart singly and separately and conspicuously, that all men have a place there. So our task is to individualize this broad, universal love, and to say, in the simplicity of a glad faith, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.' The breadth is world-wide, and the whole breadth is condensed into, if we may so say, a shaft of light which may find its way through the narrowest chink of a single soul. There are two ways of arguing about the love of Christ, both of them valid, and both of them needing to be employed by us. We have a right to say, 'He loves all, therefore He loves me.' And we have a right to say, 'He loves me, therefore He loves all.' For surely the love that has stooped to me can never pass by any human soul.

What is the breadth of the love of Christ? It is broad as mankind, it is narrow as myself.[1]

2. *The Length of Christ's love.* By the length of the love of Christ we may understand its eternal duration, it knows no beginning and it knows no end and it cannot change.

The length of Christ's love is its strength, its surviving power, its ability to defy time, accident and every other contingency. How long is it? As long as every human life. Never does that love lapse, or waver, or weary; it proves itself constant and dependable from the moment we begin to breathe till we fall asleep in death. 'Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' Even the highest human loves often break down. A mother's love, perhaps, least of all, but many a mother has been known to desert her child. God, with infinite patience, follows us tenderly and lovingly throughout our whole life, and whatever may be our course toward Him never changes His attitude toward us.

But the love of God is longer than that. It is as long as time, and that we are coming to believe is millions, perhaps billions, of years. Never since 'the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy' has that love faltered or fluctuated, but has enfolded every individual life from its opening to its close, all through these numberless centuries continuing to be the same warm, gracious, vital, dependable, personal outgoing of God's great heart to the children of men. Surely, the most learned among us has not sufficient mathematical knowledge to compute so great a force as that.

Yet the love of God is even longer than that. It is as long as eternity. And how long is eternity?

¶ When I was a lad a gentleman of our little village gave me an impression of the length

[1] A. MacLaren, *Christ in the Heart*, 43

of eternity which has never left me. He told me that if I took each sand from the ocean's beach and carried it back to the hills, and laid it down, when I had got the very last grain removed, eternity would have just begun to be. And yet God's love spans the whole of that vast, immeasurable space. What immensity! What infinitude! That side of the parallelogram as far outruns my imagination as it does my computation.[1]

¶ The thought of eternal being, when we refer it to God, towers above us and repels us; and when we turn it to ourselves and think of our own life as unending, there comes a strangeness and an awe that is almost shrinking, over the thoughtful spirit. But when we transmute it into the thought of a love whose length is unending, then over all the shoreless, misty, melancholy sea of eternity, there gleams a light, and every wavelet flashes up into glory. It is a dreadful thing to think, 'For ever thou art God.' It is a solemn thing to think 'For ever I am to be'; but it is life to say:—'O Christ! Thy love endureth from everlasting to everlasting; and because it lives I shall live also—' 'Oh! give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.'[2]

3. *The depth of Christ's love.*—By its depth is meant its condescension, its down-reach, what it was willing to sacrifice, to endure, to stoop beneath in order to bless man. How deep is the love of Christ? Human sorrow is sometimes unfathomably deep. It is not only poignant but profound, dropping one's spirit so far down that it seems almost impossible for it to rise again. But, however deep the experiences of life may go, always underneath us are the everlasting arms, downstretched to sustain and comfort us.

¶ Sin goes deep, incalculably deep. I heard a station dog barking furiously the other night and, not myself seeing anything that might occasion his agitation, I asked the agent what he was barking at. 'At that drunk lying across the track on the grass. Don't you see him?' I looked and he was right. The man was so far down that even a brute despised him. Pretty far down is that, and yet not so far but what God's arm can reach down under him and save him, as indeed it has in the case of thousands of drunkards. Hell is deep, unspeakably deep, but God's heart will never cease to beat towards those who have fallen into it. They have sinned beyond His justice, but never can a child of God sin beyond his love.[1]

Still Thy love, O Christ arisen,
Yearns to reach the souls in prison.
Through all the depths of sin and loss,
Sinks the plummet of Thy cross.
Never yet abyss was found
Deeper than Thy love can sound.

4. *The height of Christ's love.*—How high is Christ's love? As high as the highest heaven, and the throne of God, and the bosom of the Father—that bosom out of which for ever proceed all created things. Ay, as high as the highest heaven; for when Christ hung upon the Cross, heaven came down on earth, and earth ascended into heaven. Christ never showed forth His Father's glory so perfectly as when, hanging upon the Cross, He cried in his death-agony, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' These words showed the true height of Christ's love; and caused St. John to know that his vision was true, and no dream, when he saw afterwards in the midst of the throne of God a lamb as it had been slain.

The way to measure the depth is to begin at the Throne and go down to the Cross, and to the foul abysses of evil. The way to measure the height is to begin at the Cross and the foul abysses of evil, and to go up to the Throne. That is to say, the topmost thing in the Universe, the shining apex and pinnacle, is the love of God in Jesus Christ. The other conceptions of that Divine nature spring high above us and tower beyond our thoughts, but the summit of them all, the very topmost as it

[1] J. B. Shaw, in *The Expositor* (Amer.), xv. 393.
[2] A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, 45.

[1] J. B. Shaw.

is the very bottom-most, outside of everything, and therefore high above everything, is the love of God which has been revealed to us all, and brought close to us sinful men in the manhood and passion of Christ.

And that love which thus towers above us, and gleams like the shining cross on the top of some lofty cathedral spire, does not flash up there inaccessible, or lie before us like some pathless precipice, up which nothing that has not wings can ever hope to rise. The height of the love of Christ is a hospitable height, which can be scaled by us. Nay, rather, that heaven of love which is 'higher than our thoughts,' bends down, as by a kind of optical delusion the physical heaven seems to do, towards each of us; only with this blessed difference, that in the natural world the place where heaven touches earth is always the furthest point of distance from us; and in the spiritual world, the place where Heaven stoops to us is always right over our head, and the nearest possible point to us. He has come to lift us to Himself. And this is the height of His love, that it bears us up, if we will, up and up to sit upon that throne where He Himself is enthroned.

¶ Charles Simeon's text is the text of the *Four Magnitudes: 'to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.'* The *Breadth* of it! the *Length* of it! the *Depth* of it! the *Height* of it! It is, as a Roman Catholic expositor has said, '*wide* as the limits of the universe; *long* as the ages of eternity; *deep* as the abyss from which it has redeemed us; and *high* as the throne of God itself.' 'Immensity is,' as Dr. Dale finely says, 'the only adequate symbol of its vastness.' Charles Simeon explored all four of these dimensions.

He scaled the heights. As you follow him through the pages of Canon Carus's great biography, you seem to be watching some patient mountaineer as he steadfastly ascends the rugged slopes. Time after time he reaches a point that he had mistaken for the summit. There is always a peak towering above him, beckoning him on and on and on. There is always a height beyond the height. Great as were the discoveries of the love of Christ that Simeon made, he found that love still incomprehensible to the very last. It was always beyond him.

He sounded the depths. He tasted heavy losses, crushing sorrows, and bitter persecutions. At one stage of his career at Holy Trinity, the parishioners locked up their seats, undergraduates broke up the services, and Mr. Simeon was insulted whenever he ventured on the streets. He bore it all uncomplainingly, and, many years afterwards, told of the anguish through which he then passed. 'One day,' he said, 'when I was an object of much contempt and derision in the University, I strolled forth, buffeted and afflicted, taking my little Greek Testament in my hand. I prayed that God would comfort me with some cordial from His Word; and opening it, the first text which caught my eye was this: "They found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; him they compelled to bear His cross." Simon, you know, is the same name as Simeon. It was the very word I needed. What a privilege —to have the cross laid on me, to bear it with Jesus! It was enough! I could leap and sing for joy! "Lay it on me, Lord!" I cried; and henceforth I bound persecution as a wreath of glory round my brow.' However deep the abyss, the love of Christ was always beneath him.

He explored the breadths. He felt that the love of Christ was vast enough to embrace the whole wide world. He, therefore, became one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society; and, not content with this, set himself to raise up a generation of missionaries. For years he gave a tea-party once a week to which nobody was personally invited, but at which all young men from the University were welcome. Every Friday evening his rooms were thronged. The gatherings became historic. From that tea table there went forth men who, in all parts of the world, made their names illustrious and renowned. As the Bishop of Calcutta said at the time, 'the last day alone will reveal the aggregate of good he thus accomplished. If we take, as examples, only four or five cases—David Brown, Henry Martyn, John Sargent, Thomas Thomason, and

Bishop Corrie—we may judge by them, as by a specimen, of the hundreds of similar instances which occurred during the fifty-four years of his ministry.' He always spoke of his tea-party men with a faltering of the voice and a moistening of the eye. As an old man of seventy, he glanced over a list of the names of the men who, during the forty years between 1789 and 1829, had been most successful in missionary work in India. 'Why,' he exclaimed with delight, 'they are all of them my tea-party men!' He ever afterwards referred playfully to India as 'my diocese.'

And he investigated its length. Or, at least, he is investigating it still. For, as Bernardine à Piconio has already told us, it is long as the ages of eternity.[1]

Knowing the Love of Christ.

Eph. iii. 19.—'To know the love of Christ.'

How may we know it? The evidence is threefold; and to omit one or other of the strands of the cord weaken it. It is the triple cord which resists every attempt to break it.

1. First of all there is the human life of Jesus, as it is recorded in the Gospels. However fragmentary the reports, however difficult the attempt to harmonize them into a consistent record of facts, or a harmonious combination of features, there can be no question that the records give us an unexampled impression of a heart of love. Here is a love not of the common kind, emotional, impulsive, variable; it is not partial and arbitrary. Jesus, in the Gospels, does not seem to love the lovable as such, or to select favourites. True, there is the marked expression, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' but it is corrected by the statement 'having loved his own, he loved them unto the end.' A personal friendship was quite consistent with a general love. True, we are told of one young man, that Jesus looking on him loved him. But we are left to infer that such a love was not exceptional, as it was not effectual. The one He thus particularly loved did not follow after Him. His mother was dear to Him; of that the last thought on the Cross was sufficient evidence. But in a significant way He swept His eye over a crowd of listening and eager souls, and claimed them as His mother and brethren. His love was emphasized in His constant concern for the sick, the hungry, the bereaved. It was a love that wept over human suffering as well as over human perversity. It was also emphasized by His feeling towards those whom others despised, towards children, towards women, especially sinful women, and indeed towards wicked people in general.

2. But the impression of His love, made by the course of His earthly life, is wrought to an extraordinary fullness and intensity by the Cross. The atmosphere around the Cross is electric. No one can study our records of the events without being powerfully affected. There is a natural indignation at the injustice of the whole procedure; there is surprise at the ingratitude of the mob and at the enmity of the authorities. The weakness of Pilate stirs one to a sense of shame for human nature and especially for human government. The dignity and self-restraint of the Accused before His judges, the serene assurance of the issue, the splendid denunciation of the coming retribution, work upon the mind more powerfully than any designed tragedy. But in this atmosphere of quickened conscience and kindling emotion the one thing which flashes out at every moment, like lightning out of the dark thunder-clouds of a gathering storm, is the love of the Sufferer, a love even unto death. He pauses to heal a soldier wounded by the zeal of His own attendants; He turns with tender compassion to the women who are bemoaning His fate; in the mortal agony of the Cross He thinks of His surviving friends; He is anxious to save His fellow-sufferer; He prays aloud for those who are carrying out the cruel order of crucifixion. Let us say, in a word, that the whole story, as it is displayed almost unconsciously in the various records, bears out the clue which He Himself gave

[1] F. W. Boreham, *A Casket of Cameos*, 248.

beforehand; it is a Good Shepherd giving His life for His sheep, shedding His blood as a ransom, dying for the remission of sins.

3. And yet, when we have made all allowance for the portrait of love, unexampled and affecting in the story of Christ's life and death, can we say that these historic facts fully explain the language of the text? Is it possible that a human life, however unselfish and beneficent, and a brief human death, however redemptive, could awake this extraordinary rapture, and be prolonged beyond the lifetime of contemporaries? Surely not. This passion, which echoes in the language of Paul, and re-echoes with undiminished force in the hymns of Bernard, and again, with even increased fullness and feeling in the letters of Samuel Rutherford; this passion, which is known at the present time, and rises beyond the power of language in millions of Christian hearts, is to be explained only by the interior movements of the Spirit. The love of Christ is not, and never was, a cool inference from the facts of His life and death. It is an experience wrought in the soul by the spirit of God. This alone accounts for the strong and impassioned language of Paul, Bernard, Rutherford.

The love of Christ in that fullness which is hinted at by the text is made known to us by the Spirit, who presents Jesus to the individual consciousness in an engaging and overwhelming light as the lover of the soul. He comes, a spiritual presence, real and personal as the Jesus of the Gospels was to the first disciples. He presents Himself as the offering and ransom for sin, and as the giver of pardon. He approaches the door of the heart and knocks. He comes in. He again asks the question, 'Lovest thou me?' and gives the command, 'Feed my sheep.' Those raptures of communion, the glowing passages between the soul and the Saviour, could never be explained if they were the product of a reminiscence and of an historical imagination. Some who have experienced them at their highest and best have had but faint knowledge of the Gospels, and little opportunity to know them. Francis of Assisi evidently communed with Christ independently of the Gospels, and Thomas à Kempis approaches his Lord, and carries on the converse in a manner suggested, but certainly not limited, by the gospel story. No, the love of Christ, exhibited in the life and passion, is not confined to that historical fact. It is an actual and operative spiritual power that breaks into the believing soul victorious as the light. It sheds within an atmosphere of life and peace and joy. It acts upon heart and will. It constrains, it impels, it upholds.[1]

¶ Love, love (I mean Christ's love), is the hottest coal that ever I felt. Oh, but the smoke of it be hot! Cast all the salt sea on it, it will flame; hell cannot quench it; many, many waters will not quench love. Christ is turned over to His poor prisoner in a mass and globe of love. I wonder that He should waste so much love upon such a waster as I am; but He is no waster, but abundant in mercy. He hath no niggard's alms, when He is pleased to give. Oh that I could invite all the nations to love Him! Free grace is an unknown thing. This world hath heard but a bare name of Christ, and no more. There are infinite plies in His love that the saints will never win to unfold; I would it were better known, and that Christ got more of His own due than He doth.[2]

Knowing What Passes Knowledge.

Eph. iii. 19.—'To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.'

1. Love passes knowledge. It may be human love, or it may be Divine, but, whether human or Divine, it is beyond human comprehension and explanation.

(1) For instance, there are no adequate explanations in reason for the common, every-day relationships which exist in almost every home. Here is a babe, it lies helpless on its mother's breast, it cannot recognize its father's face, its lips cannot frame one syllable, it is a constant source of expense, and of care, and

[1] R. F. Horton, *The Trinity*, 138ff.
[2] *Selected Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, 43.

of worry; it frets and cries and makes continual disturbance in the home, and yet that father and mother lavish upon this little disturber of their home the richest love of which the human heart is capable. They plan constantly for this little creature and are willing to toil harder than ever before to bring it comforts and benefits. They deny themselves many of life's joys and pleasures, they perform astonishing feats of self-sacrifice, and many times they will suffer physical pain and sometimes even death itself for this little disturber. Wonderfully mysterious is the ordinary love of the human heart!

(2) But if human love passes knowledge, what shall we say of Divine love? In many instances human love has displayed heroic qualities; it can rise to a Divine height of purity and tenderness, but its noblest sacrifices are not worthy to be put by the side of the cross of Christ. No picture of human love but shows poor and dull compared with the love of Christ. 'Never man spake like this man,' said one, but never man loved like Jesus Christ. When we contemplate the manifestation of His love to mankind the mystery of love deepens, and we realize that if human love and human relationships pass knowledge and are past finding out, Divine love and the Divine relationships are ten thousand times more mysterious still.

2. Though we cannot understand or explain the love of Christ, though we cannot comprehend it in all its fullness, yet it is possible for us to know very definitely some things about it.

(1) We may know, first of all, that the love of Christ, of God, is *Father* love, *parent* love; yearning and vast, not waiting to ask the reason why, but pouring itself out in unremitting streams. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, 'Our Father,' He told us that God's love for humanity was such a love as that. There are many things which inspire love; one of them is strength, but Christ does not love us because we are strong, but because we are not strong. The words of the hymn well describe the race—

> Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail.

Nor do earthly parents love their children because of their strength; in fact that has nothing to do with it at all. The child is the weakest of creatures at birth; but its very weakness is its provision and safety. Being the weakest it is the best cared for; its place is right up against its mother's breast, where her eyes can catch the first sign of its complaint. And the weakliest baby is always the one watched with the tenderest solicitude.

(2) We may know also that the love of Christ for us is a *boundless* love—it is limitless.

¶ When Nansen, the Arctic explorer, was looking for the North Pole he found himself one day in very deep water, and he wanted to take a sounding, and so he let the line down over the side of the ship. Down, down, down it went, and when it was all played out he found it too short to reach the bottom of the sea. The next day he got more line and fastened it to the one he had used the day before, and again he let down over the side of the ship, but still it failed to touch the bottom. Again the third time he tried it, this time getting all the line he had on shipboard, but still the bottom of the sea could not be reached. And drawing up that longest line he had on shipboard he wrote down its length and added after it 'deeper than that.' Is not that descriptive of the love of Christ—and the words of Whittier sum it up most beautifully—

> Through all the depth of sin and loss,
> Drops the plummet of the cross,
> Never yet abyss was found
> Deeper than the cross could sound.[1]

(3) And the third thing which we may know about the love of Christ is, that it is a *saving* love. Jesus Himself said so when He voiced those words, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' The love of God for man compelled Him to do something to save the

[1] W. M. Sweet, in *The Expositor* (Amer.), Vol. xvi., p. 59.

race, and so He sent His Son, even Christ, to perform that mighty task. For no other purpose did the Son come into the world than to save men, than to guide the lost and wandering humanity up to God.

¶ It is told of Montaigne that on being invited to become Mayor of Bordeaux he consented, but with a reservation. 'I am willing,' he said, 'to take the city's affairs on my hands, but not on my heart.' Not so did Jesus bear our sin. He took them upon His very heart. In every sense and to every extent to which love could do so, He made even this burden of sin His own, in self-identifying sympathy and compassion realizing the crushing weight of man's sin and bearing on His own spirit the agony and burden of it. And it was this self-identifying love of Jesus for sinful men, and His being true to its constraint and leading even to the uttermost *in the situation into which He came,* that led to His suffering and ultimately to His rejection and death.

The constraint or compulsion which led ultimately to Jesus' death was a constraint or compulsion which, while prompted thus by brotherly compassion and self-identifying love with needy and sinful men, was also and further the expression or outcome of *obedience to the will of God and the carrying out of the Father's purposes.* The love to men, indeed, which He was manifesting was, He represented, a love that had its fontal source or spring not first in Himself nor in His own planning, but in the Father's mind and heart. His very presence in the world, in human nature and in human experience, was, He said, the outcome, not first of His own, but of the Father's love-devising. 'God (the Father) loved the world so dearly that he gave up his only Son' (John iii. 16). He came into the world, we have said, came as no other man has come, free-willingly; but He came, as He said Himself, not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work' (John iv. 34). 'What you hear me say is not my word, but the word of the Father who sent me' (John xiv. 24; *cf.* v. 23f., 36, vii. 16 *et passim*). It was to reveal the Father and the Father's love to men that He was in the world, and to reveal this love, not in the abstract, but *in relation to the situation created by man's sin.*[1]

The Surpassing Love of Christ.

Eph. iii. 19.—'The love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.'

It is the mystery of mysteries, the fact of the love of Christ. The world does not know of it, does not understand it, does not realize its presence, but it is always near, always mighty, always inexhaustible and free. Everything in the universe tells of it, if we were only able to read the language. It is hidden away in the heart of all existence, ever seeking new manifestation and taking advantage of every opportunity it receives to make itself known. It is even terrible in its operations; there is nothing so terrible in earth or hell; what often looks like the very negation of it, its polar opposite, is its means of breaking through into our hard hearts. It is the fire that burns in all things.

1. *Its Experience.*—That is what we are here for, to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. This is the eternal wisdom; and all that is, and all that ever has been or shall be, is the love of Christ seeking to reveal itself as God's creatures are able to receive it and respond thereto. Life is nothing other than this, but we fail to understand. The great mystics have always spoken about it in language which has puzzled the rest of mankind. They have told us that there is nothing else worth living for; they have testified to it as a reality surpassing all the power of the mind to conceive—a piercing pain, a killing sweetness, an agony of delight. We wonder what they can be talking about, what they mean by a bliss that exacts so much in suffering and renunciation; but they stick to their story. The love of Christ, they say, if we could only grasp it, is something so amaz-

[1] John Mackintosh Shaw, *The Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God,* 110.

ing, so utterly beyond all our capacities to describe, that it is to the world as though it were not.

The ordinary love that we know—the love of one human being for another—even at the highest, is a poor, feeble flicker compared with the tremendous experience of being plunged and lost in the love of Christ; and yet it is a true image of it so far as it goes, especially in what it demands—just as the colour of a rose, a lily or a daisy is a captured and incarnate sunbeam, broken up and dimmed it is true, but a genuine revelation of heaven's glory.

2. *Its Manifestations.*—If we only knew the love of Christ as it is we should see how trivial and foolish are the things we say about its modes of manifestation in this world. So far from feeling that sorrow and suffering are inconsistent with it, we should know them as its sacraments—yea, we should discover the seemingly impossible truth that the highest joy the human soul can experience comes through that gateway, and, absolute contradiction though it sounds to say so, can and does co-exist with the utmost tribulation. To the natural man nothing seems clearer than that peace and pain, sorrow and joy, are mutually exclusive, that if you are experiencing the one you cannot be experiencing the other. That is not the witness of saintship. On the contrary, the saints maintain that never have they known more exquisite happiness than when things were at their worst on the plane of the outer man; their very agonies have become bliss, as the discords in a musical theme enrich the harmonies; in fact there is no true harmony without them. What does St. Paul himself say?—'as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.'

¶ There comes a point where, in literal truth, sorrow is swallowed up in joy. Every full, rich, round tone you ever hear either in a musical instrument or a human voice is made up of innumerable dissonances resting on the background of the predominant note. Would you believe it, if an organist were to sound the note C on the keyboard of the organ, you would hear in it, without knowing what you were hearing, every other note in the scale at the same moment—every one, without exception. If you know nothing of harmony you would doubtless think it would be impossible to bear such a clash of sound. So it would, if all the sounds were of equal strength—if with the C you were hearing B and B flat and A with the same intensity at the same moment; no ear could stand it. But that is not the case—what actually makes C a beautiful tone instead of a dull, unpleasing noise, is that it gathers up into itself, though separately unheard, all the B's and B flats and A's and all the rest of the gamut for octaves above and octaves below. There are scores and hundreds of them in that one tone, absorbed in it, swallowed up in its rolling majestic fullness. And that is just what is going to happen to the soul. The joy of the Lord, when we are worthy to know it, we shall find to be a joy in which all the pain we have ever known is absorbed, transfigured, rendered glorious. It will be that that makes it joy; it will be love that has reached the uttermost of sacrifice, and passed beyond it into a region where sacrifice is no sacrifice, but the very opposite, an immeasurable gain, a possession of oneself to which no limits can be assigned to all eternity.

3. *Its Intimacy.*—God does not expect the impossible, and therefore He knows that we cannot love a person we see for the first time with the same intensity as we love our own children. We can feel good-will and sympathy towards them, but no more. And yet if love went no further than that, if there were no such thing as a particularistic, personal love, heart to heart, soul to soul, each to each, most of us would be poor indeed. We want it, we need it, and, thank God, most of us have it whether we deserve it or not. Does Christ love like that? He does; He can, as we cannot. You are just you to Him. You are to Him as though there were none other soul in the universe to redeem and care for, as though

there were none other object of His interest and solicitude. This is a thing we simply cannot grasp, a height to which we cannot ascend; but we can know the fact beyond all question. God give us grace to know it more and more.[1]

How can my faltering words express
My Saviour's love to me,
Enfolding all life's consciousness
In its immensity?

An inner undefined constraint,
Like tender mother-care,
Withdraws my soul from outward scenes,
Its blessedness to share.

It is the Spirit's gentleness
Alluring me to rest,
In God's eternal faithfulness,
As child on mother's breast.

O, wondrous, unexhausted grace!
O, Holy brooding Dove!
Create in my dull soul afresh
The fervour of Thy love.

Until in Thy captivity
My heart's dear freedom lies,
Linked by irrevocable bonds
To life that never dies.[2]

God's Ability.

Eph. iii. 20.—'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.'

In this remarkable verse we have a wonderful instance of Paul's cumulative way of speaking. Language is too poor a medium for him. He cannot get out all that is in for the dear life of him, eloquent though he was. If you had asked him about it, he would have said, 'Language is bankrupt. It will not meet the case.'

¶ I remember once, in the north of England, hearing a very celebrated and eloquent and powerful Welsh preacher, who was wonderfully fluent in the English tongue, too; but he was preaching to a full congregation of English people, and his soul was in his message. It flashed in his eye, it fired his Celtic tongue, and he was so thoroughly elevated and raised by the nobility of his theme, and the thoughts within him burnt and breathed at such a rate, that Saxon would not do, and he paused a moment and said, 'Oh, if you only understood Welsh!' Then he would have been able, in his more familiar tongue, to climb somewhat higher to the point he aimed at. I think that it is just like that with Paul. He beggars language, and then he says: 'It is not enough.' And if you analyse this verse it will take you a long time to read it. Let us try; it is worth it. 'God is *able.*' 'God is able *to do.*' 'God is able to do *abundantly.*' 'God is able to do *exceeding* abundantly.' 'God is able to do exceedingly abundantly *all.*' 'God is able to do exceeding abundantly *above* all. 'God is able to do exceeding abundantly above *all that we can ask.*' 'God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask *or think.*' I think he flung his pen down and said, 'It is no use.' It could not be. He climbed up the ladder to the very highest rung that words could take him; and then he got on a higher ladder, and climbed up as far as thoughts could take him; and then he wanted Jacob's ladder to reach to the throne of God in order to tell us what God will do to any man who says in his heart, 'Be my God.'[1]

God is Omnipotent—He knows no limitations. As Dr. Parker once said, with that tremendous emphasis of his, 'He can do everything but lie.' He is Omnipresent—He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. As He was in the beginning, He is now, and ever shall be, world without end. He is Omniscient—He sees all things from the beginning; He knows me as I can never know myself; He sees deep down into the human heart.

John Ruskin declares somewhere in his writings, 'that the reason why preaching is so commonly ineffectual is that it calls on men oftener

[1] R. J. Campbell.
[2] J. E. Livock, *Songs and Lyrics of the Inner Life*, 73.

[1] J. Jackson Wray.

to work for God, than to behold God working for them.' We require to stand still at times, and see the salvation of God. And there are few Christians who derive the exuberant confidence that they should from the fact of the Almightiness of their God. We are surrounded on every side by evidences and examples of human power. We are witnesses daily of what men can do by their inventions and contrivances. The influence of rank and wealth is felt by us all. We are conscious of being subject to the opinions and judgments of strong personalities. Every day it is driven home to us how extensive and dominant the power of human beings is. Perhaps that is the reason why we are tempted to forget 'the mighty hand and the outstretched arm of God.'

1. God is able to do. 'Able to do' means not simply that He has power in the way of omnipotence, a kind of physical mightiness which, despite all opposition or difficulty, can reach its end. Taken by itself, that might possibly be the most dismal of truths. That would not necessarily produce either hope, aspiration, or trust. It might be as dreary and unproductive as the desert sand. It might be true as true, and yet so bleak and barren that no flower of gladness could grow upon it. We all know men who *could* do things delightful and blessed and fruitful of all good—*could*, as far as bare power goes—but, alas for them and for us! they will not. Their moral dispositions are such, their ways of considering themselves and regarding others are such, that they *will not* do the things they have the power to do. Were God like them neither would He. But when He moved Paul to give us this text, He meant us to understand that He is willing so to do for us. He turns His vast resources to our account. He puts them at our disposal in a living, practical form, for His ability to do great things for us is 'according to the power that worketh in us.' As if the great doing should not be outside us, but in and through our own being and faculties, making us capable of more and even more exalted life, and raising us ceaselessly in the rank of being. 'The power that worketh in us.' When we throw ourselves open to God's Spirit, when we do justice to His grace, all the channels of our daily life are filled to overflowing with His living love and help, and He does for us beyond our highest thought.

¶ There is something so quiet, so easy, so tremendous in the contents of this word 'do.' It is not the noisy, obtrusive doings of a manufacturer; it is suggestive of an easy creation. Behind this word 'do' there hides our English word 'poem,' and it is to the naturalness and ease which mark the creation of poetry that the term refers. There is nothing of noise and perspiration in the making of a poem; it is a quiet birth; it is the emergence of mysterious power. The majority of us can *make* something that we call poetry, but the vital element is absent. We use the appropriate term in the word 'make'; it is something manufactured; it is not suggestive of the coming of a flower or the appearance of a sunrise.[1]

¶ 'According to the power that worketh in us.' 'In us,' not *on* us. That seems to be God's way of working always—from the centre outward. *We* work from the outward, and make a good surface. If a man makes an apple he spends all his time on the surface; he polishes and colours it in varied and rich hues. But he never sees the centre. God, on the contrary, begins with the germ, and from the centre works outward. The one is a piece of carpentering, the other is a growth.[2]

2. He is able to do exceeding abundantly. Here Paul coins a word for his own peculiar use. It seems as though at times the Holy Spirit crowded such great and radiant revelations into the Apostle's mind and heart that even the rich vocabulary at his disposal was not sufficient to express them. But when ordinary language fails Paul employs his own. There was no superlative at hand that could describe his sense of the overwhelming ability of God, and so he just invented a word of his own, the intensity of which can only be suggested in our English phrase 'exceeding abundantly.' The power flows up, and out,

[1] J. H. Jowett.
[2] D. Davies, *Talks with Men, Women and Children*, ii. 310.

and over! It is a spring, and therefore incalculable. We can measure the resources of a cistern; we can tell its capacity to a trifle. We can register the contents of a reservoir; at any moment we can tell how many gallons it contains. But who can measure the resources of a spring? It is to this spring-like quality in the Divine power, the exceeding abundance, the immeasurable quantity, that the Apostle refers. We can bring our little vessels to the spring and take them away filled to overflowing, and the exceeding abundance remains. The 'doing' of our God is an inexhaustible well.

3. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask. The ability of God is beyond our prayers, beyond our largest prayers! What are some of the petitions that have entered into our supplications innumerable times? What have we asked for? We have asked God for forgiveness. We have asked God for deliverance. We have asked Him for seasons of renewal. Sometimes we have thought that our asking was too presumptuous, that it was even beyond the power of God to give. And yet here comes in the apostolic doxology. What we have asked for is as nothing compared with the ability of God to give. We have asked for a cupful, and the ocean remains! We have asked for a sunbeam, and the sun abides! Our best asking falls immeasurably short of our Father's giving. It is beyond all that we can ask.

4. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we think. 'Above all that we ask or think'—we should not have been surprised if Paul had declared that the Lord could do more than we asked. With some, poverty of language is the soul's limitation. We should not be in danger of forgetting that truth, for we are all conscious of the 'thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.' We are all dimly aware at times of the truth of Lecky's words:—

> Not every thought can find its words,
> Not all within is known,
> For hearts and lives have many chords
> That never yield their tone.

There are many whose minds are choice gardens of fragrant thoughts, yet who lack the power of utterance. Therefore we should not have been surprised if Paul had merely dealt with speech, for in another sense it is sadly true, 'We have not, because we *ask* not.' But Paul leaves this thought behind; he says the Lord is able to exceed our wishes—'above all that we ask *or think*.' Not only can the Lord exceed the cry of our faltering speech—He can out-distance our swiftest thought. That is to say, not only can the Lord respond to the articulate need—He can answer the inarticulate petition. He can satisfy the lack of which we are hardly conscious. He can do more for us than our finite minds can conceive. He can exceed our highest flights of longing.

¶ Let us stretch our imaginations to the utmost! Let us seek to realize some of the promised splendours that are ours in Christ. Let our imaginations soar amid the offered sublimities of the Word of God. What is it possible for us to become? Think of the splendours of holiness that may be ours! Think of the amplitude of service that may be ours! And when our imagination has almost wearied itself in the effort to conceive our possible dignities, let us hear the apostolic song—'Above all that we . . . think!' I call to mind the men who have been supreme in holy imagination. I think of the marvellous imaginative power of John Bunyan, and his unique capacity for realizing the splendours of the Unseen. But even when I have accompanied John Bunyan, and have been amazed at his power of will, beyond all his dreams and visions I hear the apostolic word:—'Above all that we . . . think.' I remember Richard Baxter's 'Saints' Everlasting Rest.' I remember how he deals with the glories of our prospective home, how he seems to have been endowed with special vision for unveiling the raptures of the blessed. But when I have closed Richard Baxter's book in amazing inspiration, I hear the apostolic superlative—'Above all that we . . . think.' When all our workings, and all our thinkings are put together, and piled one upon another, like some

stupendous Alpine height, the ability of our God towers above all, reaching away into the mists of the immeasurable.[1]

The Power Within.

Eph. iii. 20.—'According to the power that worketh in us.'

St. Paul has already said that God is able to do exceeding abundantly. And he does not take from that statement any of its force or fullness when he adds 'according to the power that worketh in us.' But he says that the realization of God's illimitable provision for all our needs is dependent on the receptive forces that are working within our personality. How frequently we hear longing souls say: 'I need more of the Holy Ghost,' or, 'I am waiting for the Spirit'; both phrases are surely inaccurate; it is not that we need more of the Holy Spirit, it is, rather, that He needs more of us; it is not we who are waiting for the Spirit, but, rather, the blessed Spirit who is waiting for us. If there is Divine prerogative there is also human responsibility; if there is a Divine gift, there is also human reception. There must be a certain energy on the human side, co-operating with the inconceivable strength of the Divine. What is the human power?

1. It is first of all the *power of faith.* And what is faith? Faith is a two-fold constitution, the elements of which are in vital relation. It is an attitude and a venture. To sever the two is to destroy the life of both. We can no more divide the attitude and the venture and preserve their vitality than we can sustain life by the separation of flesh and blood.

(1) And what is the attitude in faith? It is the upward looking of the soul to God. 'Mine eyes are toward the Lord.' The soul looks upward into the face of God that it may discern His mind and hear His voice.

(2) And the second element in faith is the element of venture and risk. 'I will walk in the paths of thy commandments.' Having heard the Lord's will, risk it! 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them.' When I have discovered the mind of the Lord I must turn His counsel into life. I must incarnate it in conduct. I must take any risk and every risk, and boldly walk in the appointed way. The unity of these two elements constitutes the act of faith. When these are present in the soul, the soul opens out to the wondrous incoming of the Almighty God. When I am willing to risk, God is 'able to do.' When I surrender, He can impart. The greater my willingness, the richer the river of His grace. If I lose my life I shall find it. 'According to your faith be it unto you.' 'He is able to do . . . according to the power that worketh in us.'

2. The power that worketh in us is, second, *the power of a great love* to the Lord Jesus Christ. A beautiful affection for the One who has redeemed us in His own blood. There has been such a tremendous emphasis laid upon faith since the Reformation that one sometimes feels that love is in danger of being shut out in the cold.

¶ Do you remember the beautiful illustration that Professor Drummond uses in his 'Greatest Thing in the World'? He speaks of a young girl who always wore round her neck a little locket, the contents of which were never shown to anyone. One day the locket came undone by accident, and those present saw within the words: 'We love him, because he first loved us.' May we not emulate the principle of that action? Do we not owe everything to Christ? Has He not sanctified everything in human life by His sacred touch? The power of a great love is a power that works in connection with the illimitable wealth of God; it becomes a fine interpretive lens through which we see the meaning of much that seemed black and mysterious.[1]

(3) Then the power that works in us is *the power of a great sacrifice.* There is a very clear and solemn call in the New Testament for the surrender of spirit, soul, and body.

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The Examiner,* March 31, 1904, p. 300.

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The marks of the Lord Jesus, the Divine *stigmata*, ought to be branded so clearly upon our characters that men are conscious that we are related to the Saviour. Recall, with Goethe, that it is only with renunciation that life, properly speaking, may be said to begin; remember that after all *Mors janua vitae*—death the gate of life—is perfectly Scriptural; it is the man who is willing to lose his life for the sake of Christ that will eventually find it.

¶ I remember reading the life of one who has 'gone in to see the King'—Mr. Quintin Hogg—whose life and labours were so wonderfully blessed in London. On one occasion in the large Polytechnic buildings there was a party of friends from America. He was showing them round this great institution, telling them of its work and all that God had accomplished through it. They were amazed at its methods and far-reaching influences, and said to him: 'What has it cost to found and carry on an institution like this?' He smiled and quietly said, 'Well, it has meant the sacrifice of somebody's life.' [1]

(4) Yet after all, the power we need most, and according to the measure of which the all-sufficient power of God operates, is the power of a *continuous receptivity*. It is not enough that years ago we received a great inspiration; it is not enough to look back to some red-letter day in our personal experience, when God manifested Himself to our expectant gaze. We cannot live on past history; the inspiration of yesterday is not sufficient for to-day. The daily obligations demand daily inspiration; the difficult task of to-day demands a special gift of help. We must be ever drinking in great draughts of heavenly inspiration; we need continually to seek the face of God; the struggle of life and the rest of faith demand the continuous reception of power.

Let us then bow in reverence before the Glorious One with whom we have to do, lest we forget His illimitable power; let us take from His hand the strength we covet, for 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.'

O! not in circling depth or height,
But in the conscious breast,
Present to faith, though veiled from sight,
There doth His Spirit rest:
O! come, Thou Presence Infinite,
And make Thy creature blest.

[1] J. S. Holden, *Guiding Thoughts*, 51.

Asking and Thinking.

Eph. iii. 20.—'Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.'

1. WHERE is the power of God best verified? In the vast order of Creation, in the enormous Universe? On the scale of history, with its centuries, or in the tracts of space revealed to us, for example, by the telescope? Is it in this enormous realm of matter, which has become so vivid to us in these latter days?

No! the ability of God is a moral ability; its perfect expression can never be in terms of matter. It is in the moral sphere, in our human experience, that the real power of God is best verified and tested. Power is always tested and shown by the obstacles it has to overcome. We measure a force by watching it in a resisting medium. And, after all, it is our human experience, with its dullness and narrowness, its shallowness and fickleness, which really tests the power of God. When we see what God can make of the material man or woman, we recognize that His power is largely shown in His great patience with our faulty lives, in His handling us wisely, and drawing us into habits of faith and goodness, and keeping us there, without getting tired of us. We know from our experience, and from our observation of other people's lives, what God can make of a human life. He can work with it, even though it be unreliable and stubborn; He can change it; He can do for it more than we ask or imagine. We have all seen men and women made clean and sober and honest. We have seen lives altered and lifted by the grace of God—and grace is

just another word for Love in power. We know that God is too strong to be hasty; and all the evidence presses upon us this conviction—that there is a power working in us, the power of God, carrying out His purposes inch by inch.

No doubt it is beyond what we understand; far beyond our knowledge, and it often surprises us. But then, that is true of all influence. We are all to-day being influenced far beyond what we know. A father, for example, has ways of impressing his character upon his children, of which, at the time, his children are unconscious; and it is when looking back afterwards that they see the telling power of the father. God is prepared to do for us what exceeds our belief, and repeatedly men and women have to wake up and say: 'God is in this place, and I never knew.'

2. At the same time it is assumed that we do ask or think. He is 'able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.' But our co-operation is required. God cannot work in a vacuum. If we give God empty minds and idle wills, or lives under the bondage of prejudice and antipathy—well, He can do no mighty works there. He requires a life with some spirit of effort, and desire, and thought, and with prayer in it. And if there be any failure in the Church or individual life the reason is not with God, but with us. 'If missions are a failure,' said Mary Slessor, 'it is our failure and not God's. If we only prayed and had more faith what a difference it would make!' And that is true of missions and of all branches of our religious service. 'If we only prayed,' if we only asked or thought—what a difference it might make. It might allow the power of God to come more into play in our lives. If we thought more and prayed more we should be less hasty, less apt to be discouraged, less conventional. There is an idea abroad that we had better not think too much about our religion—'let us work our religion but don't let us think about it.' But the things of God bear thinking about. The greatest object of human thought is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the revealed God. And all the relations of life branch out from our thought of God's power in the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Have ye understood these things?' said Jesus once to His disciples, after an address. 'O, yes, Lord, we have understood them.' But we know they hadn't. We think we understand, but we fail often to put thought and meditation into the revelation we receive. And without the effort of will and mind nothing ever can be done. Let us 'ask or think.'

3. In this hurrying age we talk about religion and the Church. We talk, and talk, and talking has its place. But do we think?

(1) For example, do we think how much might be gained for God's Kingdom in our land if we could get rid of some of our needless Church divisions, with their friction and bad example and jealousy? We have grown so accustomed to them—we were born in them—that not, perhaps, until we go abroad, and see them from a greater angle, do we realize how small and sour they are, and how difficult it would be at the Judgment of God to justify ourselves.

(2) Again, do we think, as we ought, about how other people live? Would it not make for good-will in our social condition if people thought more about the difficulties and handicaps of those in other classes than themselves; those who are poorer, and those who are richer? Easy it is for us to mark their lapses and criticise their faults; but in many cases we are unjust to them. . . . If we put ourselves into other people's places, and took time for thought, this would be a happier world.

(3) Or, again, do we think, as we should, about our personal lives, steadily and quietly—what it might mean if we were better Christians? Do we put God's law before our ordinary lives? Do we take the trouble to watch ourselves as we are getting older?—to watch, especially, our day-dreams, which are one of the unconscious revelations of personality. It is for want of this steady thought that the Church and the world are vexed by the good man in a hurry, and the good man who hesitates.

We must think more, for example, of what it means to love one another. . . . If we thought out that, it would take us longer than we realize, and would add infinitely to the power of our lives.[1]

Glory to God.

Eph. iii. 21.—'Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever.'

1. As the glory and renown of the workman is in the degree in which his work answers to his highest design, so the glory of God is in the degree in which the world and humanity embody and shadow forth the will of their Creator. 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God before ordained that we should walk in them.' That is the Christian philosophy of man. And assuredly it is not more true that only the Creator can glorify the creature than it is true that only the creature can glorify the Creator. The sculptor glorifies his statue, touching and retouching it, remedying a defect here, and emphasizing a beauty there; and when he has brought it as near perfection as may be, then the statue glorifies the sculptor, and proclaims his skill, his soul, his genius to present and future generations.

We are God's workmanship, and His glory is revealed in all of that will which He fulfils in humanity and the world, throughout all generations unto the ages of the ages. Looked at in that light, the course of Time is the dawning and gradual deepening of the glory of God. Each century has been notable as the glory of the Lord has risen upon it. History, rightly interpreted, is the amazing strife of the Spirit or Will of God with man. It is humanity, taken possession of and glorified by the Eternal, and, as Paul says, 'according to the power that worketh in us,' working out our law and life of salvation. The tragedy of history is always the coarse, intractable material opposing itself to the finer touches of the Eternal Hands—nay, even voluntarily, in very viciousness of reaction, thwarting the sacred Artist, and bringing to nought the Divine pattern. The model prayer for all the centuries is 'Thy will be done.' Man's chief end is to glorify God by allowing God to glorify Himself, and have His perfect work in the obedience of the human spirit.

¶ I saw how the butterfly with wings of radiant beauty spread itself in the sunlight. And I said, 'What are you doing?' And it said, 'Glorifying the God who made me beautiful.' And in a few hours it was gone.

Again, I heard the nightingale singing. 'What are you doing?' I said. And it answered, 'Glorifying the God who taught me music.' And in a few days it was dead. And I heard the stars singing in the morning for joy. 'What are you doing?' I said. 'Glorifying God,' said they, 'who hath made us very good.' But the wise men told me that the stars were worlds dying or dead. Then I said, 'Who will glorify God for evermore?' And a voice said to me, 'This is *thy* work; for this thou wast made—to live for ever and to glorify God by loving Him, and obeying Him, and living in the beauty of holiness.'

2. But God is glorified especially in the Church. 'Unto him be glory in the Church.' If the world wants to see the glory of God, to know wherein it consists, and what is the Spirit, the Will, the Life of the Eternal, it is to turn to the Church and find it there. A veiled glory, still! Veiled, as the world veils it; for here the paradox holds, that expression is repression. Revelation is limitation. But still it should be possible for all to see in every Church, as in a glass darkly, the glory of God.

The glory of God in the Church is through (or in) Christ Jesus. For if, as we all believe, Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Father's glory, we say the same thing when we say that the purpose of the Church is to reveal Christ. Christ's modern incarnation is to be in His Church. Through His Church He is still and ever to be manifest to the world. Through His Church He is to continue His work of healing, helping and saving humanity. Through His Church He is still to mingle in

[1] J. Moffatt.

all the joys and sorrows of men, and hallow them. Through His Church He is still to teach the humble, open the eyes of the blind, and give speech to the dumb. Through His Church His deeds of mercy and grace are to be repeated in every land and in every age; and through His Church His life of faith and labours of love shall be discovered anew to each generation unto the ages of the ages. That is the teaching of the New Testament. 'Christ in us,' the life of Christ manifest in mortal flesh. He in us and we in Him, that we may be glorified in Him. and that He may be glorified in us. It is a transcendent conception. It is the old man's dream and the young man's vision still. All the highest achievements possible to humanity sink into insignificance beside this manifestation of Christ to the world.

We have here the only method of securing that unity which is the true glory of the Church. It is to be spiritually sought. It cannot be artificially concluded. It is to be sought by each of us through our personal union with the Father. Brotherhood is contained in Fatherhood. He who is not a brother in faith is not a son. All tricks of mere organization will fail. These deep and holy ties cannot be forged by the wirepullers. All the red tape in the universe cannot make us brothers in Christ if we are not actually within the All-Father's family. Secretaries may draft resolutions, and they may be carried by show of hands, printed and circulated, but they will not carry two souls anywhere into closer actual sympathy of the spiritual sort. That is work for Divine hands! 'To them gave he the right to become children of God who were born not of the will of man but of God.' We talk of the crowning marvel of speech with the inhabitants of Mars; but what is so wonderful as to talk with Christ, and have Christ talk with us? These mystic ties are spiritual affinities. They are created in us by spiritual experience, and cultivated by genuine spiritual discipline. We must find our way through Christ into the Father's love, and then we shall be one with all who enjoy that ineffable privilege, and stand with us within that charmed circle. We shall have become a church without knowing it. Links will have been formed between us stronger than links of steel. We shall have perfect unity of spirit and life. We shall glorify God in the Church through Christ Jesus.[1]

Our Calling.

Eph. iv. 1.—'I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called' (RV).

What is this vocation or calling?

1. It may be the name of Christian, or follower of Christ, whom St. Paul had made known to them. They were a small body of Christians in the midst of a great heathen city; in a city, too, in which all the vices of the degenerating Greek and Roman life were mingled with wild freedom of Oriental luxury and indulgence. The time of definite persecution had not yet come to them, but in Ephesus, as in Rome, they were no doubt subject to much misconception and slander among their unbelieving neighbours. Yet if St. Paul's work was to be strong and fruitful, if the Church of Christ was to grow and spread in that great capital of Asia, they must be worthy of the name which they bore, they must show the meaning of 'Christian,' by setting before the eyes of the world the gracious example of Christian life.

And so he proceeds to give them practical teaching of what the Christian life implies, the gentleness and kindness, the purity and self-constraint which mark the Christian character as it marked that of Christ Himself. If they call themselves Christians, they must aim at showing before men the life which their name implies.

¶ In one of Burke's great Warren Hastings speeches he tells of an Anglo-Indian, a Mr. Paterson, who was subjected to extraordinary temptations to fraud and peculation. He had unusual opportunities of acquiring vast wealth illegitimately. And at the pinch when he

[1] C. Silvester Horne, *The Rock of Ages*, 245ff.

felt himself giving way, he ever took out and read a letter from his father, charging him when he left home to be true to the family name, a letter, as Burke says, 'full of integrity and incorruptness,' which carried Mr. Paterson through 'all the trying exigencies of his life.'[1]

2. But it is something more definite than that. Throughout St. Paul's Epistles we find constantly recurring the idea of the calling or summons of God to those who are His: 'Faithful is he that calleth you,' 'The prize of the heavenly calling,' 'The hope of your calling,' 'Them that are called according to his purpose.' Some such expression occurs in almost every Epistle; and the idea on which it rests is something more than the mere calling by a particular name, something more than a mere allusion to the first conversion and admission to the Church of those to whom he wrote. The idea rather seems to be that of the summons of God to each one of us to be that which God created us to be and meant us to be. This is what St. Paul most frequently brings forward as a motive for the best and highest life. He does not so much appeal to us on the ground of fear for the consequences of sin, on the ground of punishment or the anger of God, but on that of the greatness and nobility of that life which God calls on His sons to lead.

God has His ideal for each of us. What is this ideal? It is not enough to answer, The ideal is that I should be very good, very kind, very this or very that. If it were no more than that, every one of us would have a different notion, and the best of us a very feeble notion, of the ideal man. And yet thousands of people set up a little tiny ladder of their own making, and say, I must try to climb to the top of it. And sometimes it is so tiny that they succeed, and are quite satisfied with themselves. They have never had a vision of the ladder that reaches from earth to heaven. If we start from man's point of view, we shall never get anywhere. We must try to see what God thinks about it.

[1] H. Handley.

God's ideal for us is that we should be perfect as He is perfect. The eternal God, by His very nature, wishes to *express Himself*, reveal Himself, throw Himself forth in space and time. And the result is the Universe, the Creation, the continual calling into being and sustaining of all things that are. And man is the highest created instrument of God's Self-expression. The lower animals, the vegetables, and the minerals are all His instruments to express His life impersonally; man is His instrument to express Him personally, and perfectly. God has an 'eternal purpose' as St. Paul calls it, an age-long plan; and I am one detail in that plan. He gives me my earthly existence, by His deliberate will He begat me, I came from Him, for one sole purpose—to be an expression of Him. Christ said, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,' and even we have the privilege of striving to be able, in our little measure, to say the same thing.

¶ A great musician is about to compose a symphony. Before he writes down the notes, he has them in his thoughts. In his thoughts the symphony is exactly as he wants it to be; it is perfect; all the harmonies are perfect; all the several parts for the instruments in a huge orchestra are perfect. And he throws out his thoughts into the written score. The symphony becomes, in a sense, separate from himself, although it originated in his very being, and never, in fact, leaves it. Why does he do this? Because he must. He wants all the harmonies, and the working out of the theme, to come rushing back to his soul exactly as he thought them. He wants every sound from every instrument to be in accord with his perfect idea of what it ought to be. He wants the symphony, which was, and is, within his being as a complete timeless whole, to return to him in the form of a musical process, worked out in time.

And from all eternity the universe has been God's thought, included in His very Being. In His eternal thought all mankind is quite perfect. And He threw forth His thought in a perfect form in Jesus Christ. The score is the visible, tangible expression of the

perfect symphony. The Incarnate Christ is the human expression of God's very thought, that is, His very Being. And God longs that the 'score' may be perfectly reproduced, worked out, by the great orchestra of mankind. From all eternity your life and mine, in the perfection that He wants, have been in His thought; and now He wants to hear the perfect performance of His composition. And we can do that only by living the life of Jesus Christ. That is not merely an *imitatio Christi;* the orchestra does not 'imitate' the score. The score *is* the symphony, available for all; and all must reproduce it. We must live Christ.[1]

Forbearing.

Eph. iv. 2.—'With longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.'

'FORBEARING'—the word, used literally, signifies '*holding back*'—i.e., from anger or revenge on account of differences and provocations. Sometimes the word 'suffer' is employed as a translation, as when our Lord, speaking of a faithless generation, exclaims, 'How long shall I suffer you?' Forbearance endures patiently contradiction and provocation, it pities and forgives the offender, holding back the arm of vengeance.

If we may take 'with longsuffering' and 'forbearing' together, there are three ways in which the Apostle bids us exercise forbearance.

1. With longsuffering.—Longsuffering and forbearance have a very *near* kinship with each other; they are twin sisters among the Christian virtues. While 'forbearance' means literally a holding in, or a checking and restraining of our displeasure against annoyance or insult, 'longsuffering' means long-mindedness in holding our anger or indignation in check. It is this power of bearing up under offences, by word or deed; this power of resisting the allurements of temptation; this power of standing against the fierceness of persecution that the Apostle desired every Christian to acquire. It is, then, in our relations with our fellowmen that we shall especially require the exercise of longsuffering forbearance. We must carefully guard against substituting unconsciously a stoical, stolid indifference in the place of that patient suffering and forgiving spirit inculcated by St. Paul.

¶ About 300 years after the birth of Zeno, the founder of the Stoic philosophy, we find Christianity making its way especially among the poorer classes. Gradually Christianity became adopted by the wealthy and philosophical classes, and moved for a time parallel with Stoicism. Soon men began to see that the good that was in Stoicism, Christianity held in a higher degree. Stoicism made stern duty to be the one great object in life; pleasure was scarcely recognized. It taught that men should so subdue their emotions and passions that no insult should move them; that no circumstance or event in life should exalt them with joy or depress them with grief; that the endurance of pain should rather be sought for than avoided. The stern and resolute endurance of the Stoics is the nearest approach, among all the ancient philosophies, to the gracious longsuffering of Christianity. And would not the forbearing conduct of those Stoics put to shame the conduct of many who call themselves Christians?[1]

2. The forbearance must be mutual—'forbearing one another.' The calling and conduct of individual Christians is set before us in the context. As members of the glorious Church of Christ, we must walk worthily. Christ is the Divine Head; Christians are the Body, and members one of another. Therefore, forbearance among Christians must be mutual. In the Christian life there will be much occasion for the exercise of longsuffering forbearance. Even those who may truly be called Christians may not always walk perfectly and without stumbling. Imperfections will show themselves at times. Our brethren will not always deal justly and kindly with us; they will not always judge us honestly

[1] A. H. McNeile.

[1] J. W. Kaye.

and with righteous judgment; and they may even say bitter and untruthful things against us. What then? Shall we grow angry and resentful; shall we threaten them with 'paying them back'; shall we return arrogance for arrogance, spite for spite, and railing for railing? That would not be Christianity—it would be heathenism. Christ is our great Example, 'who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not.' Christ bears for long years with all our sins and wickedness, and shall we not bear for a short time with the affronts of our brethren?

¶ Why do we take umbrage so easily at what are mere pin-pricks? Why do we call well-meaning people insupportable, on account of some little trick of manner, which gets, as we say, upon our nerves? There is but one answer to such questions. It is because we do not forbear one another in love. There are, of course, greater wrongs than these, which may occasionally—as a rule only very occasionally—befall us. We may be injured, outraged, insulted by malevolent attacks which cannot be disregarded. Such things do occur, even in civilized life. Then comes the test of our powers of Christian forbearance. Then we need to remind ourselves of Him 'who when he was reviled, reviled not again.' We need to call up our last reserves of moral and spiritual strength if we are to overcome that desire for retaliation which is so strong in the natural man.[1]

¶ It was said of Henry Ward Beecher that no one ever felt the full force of his kindness till he had done Beecher an injury. If we ponder that saying for a moment it may enable us to measure how much we have still to learn of Christlikeness, 'no one ever felt the full force of his kindness till he had done him an injury.' It is very plain that to be a real Christian takes all the effort and prayer, all the grace of God and the fellowship of Christ that a man can compass. Beecher's in this matter was the real thing, not negative, but positive and Christ-like. And the world had never more need for real Christians of that sort than it has to-day.[1]

[1] H. G. Woods.

3. It must be in love. There is no truer mark of a noble-minded man than forbearing to take revenge on an enemy when he is in his power. But when that forbearance is moved and inspired by forgiving love then we have the mark not only of a noble-minded man, but of a noble-minded Christian. Those ancient Stoics, Greeks or Romans, would bear an affront or an injury unmoved, without malice. They would readily forgive an injury, because, said they, 'To act against one another is contrary to nature, and it is acting against one another to be angry with one another' (Aurelius, *Thoughts*, ii. 1). Stoicism would forbear and forgive by ignoring; but Christianity would forbear and forgive by loving. Christian forbearance inspired by love would not only bear in patience an injury, but would hide the faults and excuse the failings of the doer of the injury. It is not for Christians to 'pay back' an injury by revenge and thus to balance accounts with their enemies. It is for Christians to cherish the feeling of brotherly love; to think much of the excellencies in each other's characters; and to win each other from faults and failings by forbearance and love. Instead of the spirit of fault-finding and carping criticism we should cherish the spirit of tender compassion and helpfulness; seeking to restore a falling, sinning brother by our gentleness and wise discretion in dealing with his infirmities.

¶ In his poem, *The Sentimental Bloke*,[1] Mr. C. J. Dennis gives us a fine example of such forbearance. Bill, the husband of eight weeks, meets some old companions, falls to drinking and gambling, and then to more drinking. In the early hours of the morning he turns his steps homeward and this is how Doreen, his wife, receives him.

She never magged; she never said no word;
But sat an' looked at me an' never stirred.
I could 'a' bluffed it out if she 'ad been
Fair narked, an' let me 'ave it wiv 'er tongue;

[1] A. Alexander, *The Stuff of Life*, 48.

But silence told me 'ow 'er 'eart was wrung.
Poor 'urt Doreen!
Gorstruth! I'd sooner fight wiv fifty men
Than git one look like that from 'er agen!

. . . . . .

An' then, I sneaks to bed, an' feels dead crook.
Fer golden quids I couldn't face that look—
That trouble in the eyes uv my Doreen.
Aw, strike! Wot made me go an' do this thing?
I feel jist like a chewed up bit of string,
An' rotten mean!
Fer 'arf an hour I lies there feelin' cheap;
An' then I s'pose, I muster fell asleep. . . .

'Ere, Kid, drink this' . . . I wakes, an' lifts me 'ead,
An' sees 'er standin' there beside the bed;
A basin in 'er 'ands; an' in 'er eyes—
(Eyes that wiv unshed tears is shinin' wet)—
The sorter look I never shall ferget,
Until I dies.
'Ere, Kid, drink this,' she sez, an' smiles at me.
I looks—an' spare me days! *It was beef-tea!*

Beef-tea! She treats me like a hinvaleed!
Me! that 'as caused 'er lovin' 'eart to bleed.
It 'urts me worse than maggin' fer a week!
'Er! 'oo 'ad right to turn dead sour on me,
Forgives like that, an' feeds me wif beef-tea . . .
I tries to speak;
An' then—I ain't ashamed o' wot I did—
I 'ides me face . . . an' blubbers like a kid.[1]

Unity.

Eph. iv. 3.—'Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.'

THE world upon which St. Paul looked out was a divided world. Outwardly, indeed, it appeared more united than ever it had been before, in the iron bond of the Roman empire. But this political unity did not correspond to any religious or social unity. St. Paul was a Jew, and in every city of the empire there were Jews, worshipping the one God, and holding it the chief point of religion to be as separate as possible from their neighbours the Gentiles, who worshipped many gods and hated the Jews for their religious aloofness. To the Jew the Gentile was a dog, and no words could express the contempt of the Gentile for the Jew. Here was one of the great divisions of the world. Another was the division between slaves and freemen. A slave was hardly counted a man: he was a piece of property with no rights of his own. He might be well-treated or ill-treated at his master's pleasure: he was bought and sold. So between bond and free a deep gulf yawned. Besides these, there were the divisions which we ourselves look out upon to-day—rich and poor, noble and base-born, educated and ignorant, cultured and rude. The world was seamed and scarred across and across with divisions which separated man and man.

Yet St. Paul could speak of a unity, a oneness which could bind men together. Moreover he could speak of it not as an idea merely, but as an existing fact; as something which had come into the world already, and which must be cherished and kept with all possible care as the great hope of human life. He tells those to whom he is writing that they must be 'eager to keep the unity' which in this letter he has been describing to them.

1. Those who accepted Christ as their Lord received a new life. The Spirit of Christ entered into them, and enabled them to live as Christ lived; to live as sons of the heavenly Father, in holy reverence towards God, and in helpful service of their brother men. By the simple ceremony of baptism they were linked into one society in Christ's name: and by partaking together of bread and wine in His name they cemented their union with Him and with one another, and were strengthened and refreshed with His body and His blood. They were made and kept one in Him. It did not matter whether they had been Jews before

[1] p. 85.

or heathens before: they were lifted now into something higher than either. By baptism in Christ's name they were placed on a level of perfect equality. It did not matter whether they were slaves or freemen. They were lifted by their baptism into a position of equal spiritual privilege. The slave, as St. Paul said, was Christ's freeman: the master was Christ's slave. It did not matter whether they were rich or poor, high or low, wise or unlearned. They were lifted by their baptism to an equal wealth and nobility of spiritual riches and divine sonship. They were children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

2. This was the unity which St. Paul so prized. Here was, to his view, the hope of the world. They were one body, he told them in his letters: one body in Christ, with one spirit, the very Spirit of Christ, inspiring and strengthening them. As individuals they were parts of the whole, not complete wholes in themselves. They were members or limbs of the body. Of course they were not all alike: there are great differences between different parts of the same body. One man was a foot, another a hand, another an ear, another an eye. They had different gifts and different functions to perform. But they all worked together, they all served the purposes of the body. Their unity was a corporate unity—the unity of the one body and the one spirit which gave life to the body.

3. What has been the result to the world of that little seed of unity which was planted in apostolic days? We know that the Christian society of baptized men and women has claimed to itself the great races of the civilized world. What effect has it produced in healing the deep divisions of mankind? Something indeed has been done; and we do well to take account of it. First, the fierce controversy between Jew and Gentile as to their rights and privileges within the Christian society has disappeared: even in St. Paul's own lifetime the Gentiles had secured their equal footing. Next, after many centuries, the great curse of slavery has been removed from all Christian countries, and men are no longer bought and sold as cows and horses. Further, the provision of education for the very poorest has begun to do something to bridge the gulf which for so long divided those who could read and write from those who could not, and a way is opened for the workman's clever boy to reach the university. Yes, something has been done. It is slow work indeed, but yet the world moves. And this in spite of the miserable fact that the Christian society has fallen so far short of the Apostle's ideal, and has so conspicuously failed to 'keep the unity.' If the unity had been kept, how great would the progress have been!

(1) The task before our generation is to propagate the idea of unity, to read St. Paul's Epistle again, and to teach men his doctrine of the one body with the one spirit as the one hope of mankind. We must take the highest ground. We must not base unity on expediency. We must not say, division is weakness, let us unite; but, division is a contradiction of the ideal of Christian life: it is a sin against the spirit of fellowship: it robs the Christian message of its meaning, it renders nugatory the one hope of our calling.

(2) And while we proclaim afresh the ideal, we must be eager to realize it to the utmost of our power in our own immediate surroundings. The next great preacher of unity after St. Paul was Ignatius of Antioch. As he was carried on his long journey to martyrdom at Rome, he wrote his last words to church after church, imploring them in Christ's name to submit themselves to their bishops for the sake of unity. Conscious that he was the bearer of a Divine message, he used the very language of inspiration: 'The Spirit proclaimed,' so he writes, 'and said: Cherish union, shun divisions.' This was his central message, and he added the testimony of his own experience of life: 'I myself have so sought to do my own part as a man perfectly fitted into unity.'[1]

[1] J. Armitage Robinson, *The Vision of Unity*, 43ff.

All who speak Truth to me commissioned are;
All who love God are in my Church embraced.
Not that I have no sense of preference—
None deeper!—but I rather love to draw,
Even here, on earth, on toward the future law
And Heaven's fine etiquette, where 'Who?' and 'Whence?'
May not be asked; and at the Wedding Feast,
North shall sit down with South, and West with East![1]

The Unity of the Spirit.

Eph. iv. 3.—'Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit.'

WHAT is to be kept is 'the unity of the Spirit.' This phrase may admit of different interpretations, but let us understand it in its most strictly literal sense, as indicating the unity of which the Holy Spirit is the author, that oneness of believing men in Christ which is the Spirit's new creation. Of course, in that view, it must be a unity corresponding in its nature and character to the nature and character of Him who is its Author and Creator. It cannot therefore be merely outward and formal. It may be that; but it must be something more than that. It must be inward and spiritual. And the outward and the inward, the formal and the spiritual, must meet in this unity, and harmonize and be at one.

Thus the unity may be regarded as twofold. It may be viewed in two lights—as outwardly manifested, and as inwardly wrought. But in either view, it is the unity of the Spirit. It is unity of which the Spirit is the immediate author. It is unity of the Spirit's making.

1. *The outward Unity.*—It is a unity that may be seen, and known, and read of all men. Now, holiness and love, godliness and charity, if they exist at all, must make themselves visible. A holy and loving man, or woman, or child, is not an inward ideal, but an outward, palpable reality. The Spirit makes holy and loving men, and women, and children. And that is His unity in its outward manifestation, as well as its inward birth. Thus He manifests His unity, inwardly and outwardly. That is the visible unity which He produces, which alone is worthily and truly His.

No doubt the unity of a common badge, or of a common dress, a shaven crown, a red cross, a peculiar gown or hat, scarlet stockings, and the like, may be more discernible, and discernible with less trouble. It may be deceptive, nevertheless; specious, yet hollow; a seeming oneness, covering all but infinite diversities. But true holiness and true love are everywhere and always the same. And there is nothing under them. They cover nothing. Where holiness and love prevail, there can be no diversities. All holy and loving persons speak and act alike, because they think and feel alike. Is not that the true ideal of the holy catholic church?—holy and loving persons associated together?

¶ There is a pleasing story of the conduct of a Roman Catholic priest in Ireland who, when the saintly Protestant Bishop of Kilmore, William Bedell, was buried in 1642, attended the funeral, and exclaimed, 'O that my spirit might be with his!' Even the fierce conflicts of that cruel age, and the immediate inflammations which then made life in Ireland almost unendurable, could not destroy the witness of his spirit to the essential Christianity of an alien and a heretic.[1]

2. *The inward Unity.*—But the real seat of this unity is within, in the heart. There, of course, it is invisible, save only to God the Father, who is indeed Himself its living centre. For the unity which the Spirit effects among all the redeemed is primarily and essentially unity in God the Father; unity, in a high sense, with God the Father. It is the unity of which Christ speaks when He prays: 'That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the

[1] Burbidge.

[1] H. Hensley Henson, *Westminster Sermons*, 180.

glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me' (Jn. xvii. 21-23).

That oneness which Christ thus seeks is the unity of the Spirit. The Spirit is Himself one with the Father and the Son, in the Divine unity or oneness with which, in some sense, the human is here so wonderfully identified. It is as being Himself one with the Father and the Son, in their mutual indwelling in one another in love, that He makes us one; through the Son's dwelling in us as the Father dwelleth in Him; and the indwelling in us consequently of the very love with which the Father loves the Son. That is 'the unity of the Spirit,' the only unity that can be worthily ascribed to Him. It is, as the Lord intimates, a unity which, in its fruit or issue, may be and must be visible; for by it the world is to 'know that the Father hath sent him.' But in its deep source and seat it is invisible. It is the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear Him. It is a communication made by the Spirit of God to and within the deepest spirit in man. It is His causing us to know and believe the love with which God has loved us. It is not our loving God but His loving us—loving us as He loves His own Son—that constitutes our unity or oneness, first with God the Father, and then, in Him, with one another as brethren. It is no narrow, earthly, selfish unity, but a unity wide and high and heavenly.

O Son of God, whose love so free
For men did make Thee Man to be,
United to our God, in Thee
May we be one.

Thou, Lord, didst once for all atone;
Thee may both Jew and Gentile own
Of their two walls the corner-stone,
Making them one.

Join high with low, join young with old,
In love that never waxes cold;
Under one Shepherd, in one fold,
Making all one.

O Spirit blest, who from above
Cam'st gently gliding like a dove,
Calm all our strife, give faith and love;
O make us one.[1]

Christian Unity.

Eph. iv. 3.—'Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'

1. It is impossible to read the Epistle to the Ephesians without being impressed by St. Paul's sense of the overwhelming importance of Christian Unity, and by the fact that the creation of it is the special work of God the Holy Ghost. 'Walk worthily,' the Apostle cries, 'of the vocation wherewith ye are called . . . endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all.' And yet, in spite of this and similar passages, in spite even of our Lord's repeated prayer to His Father (in Jn. xvii.) for His disciples 'that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me'—in spite of these words, 'our unhappy divisions' have become a proverb and a byeword. They supply the scoffer with one of the hardest taunts to answer. They furnish the indifferent with one of the most plausible excuses for his indifference. They form one of the greatest hindrances to the Church's missionary work, and to the spread of our faith, whether at home or abroad.

'To educated heathen sojourning in this country,' wrote a non-Christian in our leading newspaper some years ago, 'the endless divisions of Christians are a matter for constant merriment. Each sect is never tired of pronouncing the mild curse of damnation upon the rest.' What wonder, then, not only that we are ashamed of the fact of our divisions, but that there is a yearning desire in the

[1] C. Wordsworth.

hearts of many, a desire which, thank God, is steadily increasing, to put an end to them. And what wonder that, when there are voices on either hand which seem to promise to bring it about, men eagerly listen and are tempted to cry out, 'Let us have unity *at any price,*' or else, as they listen to voices widely differing from each other, get confused and bewildered, and scarcely know what to think or which way to turn.

Wherever the initial fault may have been, whether in the intolerance of the Church in not allowing for varieties of type within her borders, or in the variants themselves, through a defective sense of proportion and perspective, taking a part for the whole, the one clear and unmistakable call to-day is to unification. Every time the various sections of the Christian Church separately surround the Table of the Lord they solemnly engage in a great declaratory act. They affirm the unity of Christ's Body, which is His Church, and they pledge themselves to Him as its Head. That is to say, they bear witness to a truth in worship, which, so long as they remain apart, they contradict in work; they affirm in creed what they deny in conduct. If the Church is to vindicate her claim to sincerity, she must come together. She must make every effort and even every sacrifice, to realize 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'

¶ Speaking upon the 'Closer Union and Fuller Co-operation of Believers in Christ,' George Müller sensibly and pointedly said: 'What will help us, who believe in Christ, to be more united together? One might say: "Oh, we must give up our differences." Allow me affectionately and humbly to say: "I do not think so." According to my judgment, a closer union would not be brought about by our giving up our own views of what we consider to be taught us by God and the Scriptures. Not thus, but the great point is to let the foundation truths of our holy Faith have their proper place. We have not to say: "Now I will put away for the time being all that I hold distinctively from my brethren." No; nor do I expect this from other brethren. With great diligence and prayerfulness, and, if necessary, great sacrifice, ought we to "buy the truth"; but, having obtained it, for no price whatever is it to be sold.

'This is *one* side of the truth; the *other* side is this: The foundations of our holy Faith are so great, so momentous, and so precious, so altogether super-abounding in comparison with anything else, that, if we lived more under their influence, and more valued and enjoyed them, we should be constrained to love one another, to be knit together in love. We have the one, selfsame Saviour; by faith in the Lord Jesus we are all introduced into the same family; through believing the Gospel we become the children of God, and members of the same heavenly family. Now, if this were present to our hearts, that we all have one Father in heaven; one Saviour; are all bought by the same precious blood, and baptized by the Holy Ghost into one Body; are all walking the same road to heaven, and ere long shall all reach the same Home—if all this were present to our hearts, I say, this or that difference of opinion would not separate or alienate us. There is a blessedness and sweetness connected with really holding the membership of the Body, and loving our fellow-believers, though we differ from them, that brings unspeakable joy to the soul.' [1]

2. 'In the bond of peace.' The word 'bond' is finely suggestive. In the original it stands for the ligaments or sinews by which the joints of the human body are knitted together. Now, a bodily ligament is a piece of vital tissue. It is a bond which life itself creates and sustains. It is not something superimposed upon the living organism from outside and detachable from it without damage to its parts. It is life's own product and provision, woven from within for the very purpose of safeguarding its functions and securing the effective working of all its parts towards the ends for which the organism exists. Any rupture or strain of the ligamentary tissues of the body, unless repaired or relieved, will induce a permanent weakness of the parts. And so with the ties that bind together the different

[1] *The Life of George Müller*, 314.

members or Body of Christ. They are neither outward nor artificial, but inward and vital. So much so, that either to rupture them by violence or to weaken them by neglect is to imperil the organism which they assist to unify, and thus to threaten its life. If we are in Christ, we are sharers in a common life which holds us all in its vital grasp, and ever seeks to organize us into a corporate unity. Do not let us, by whatever name we may be called, resist and grieve that Spirit who is everywhere and always making for the healing of division and the fulfilment of the Saviour's prayer: 'That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou didst send me.' The 'Bond' that binds together the Church of God may thus be very rightly designated the 'Bond of peace.'

O truth of God, whose might can free
All souls beneath the sun,
Come, set our love at liberty,
And make of many, one;
Come, pour thy ray on all that is,
Reveal the Friend Divine,
And he that is a friend of His
Shall be a friend of mine.

O truth of God, thy light display
Till every shade be gone,
Take all that clouds the heart away,
And make of many, one;
One Master's peace the strife shall end,
One Life our lives combine,
And he that is my Master's friend
Shall be a friend of mine.[1]

One Body.

Eph. iv. 4.—'There is one body and one Spirit.'

In the Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul draws out the idea of the body—many members, each with its own proper functions, its own proper activity, all working together; the action of the hand never opposed to the action of the foot; no schism in the body; but all the members perfectly and naturally co-operating to fashion out the one life. The interpretation is at once clear. Each Christian man and woman is a member in the one Body of Christ. None may go his own ways or seek his own ends. None is independent of his fellow Christians. But all (in the ideal) work together and live one life, each taking that particular part in the one life which God assigns to him. Here, in this later Epistle, St. Paul carries forward and explains his earlier parable. What is the reason of the unity of the human body? Why do the limbs co-operate? Because in a man the members are all ruled by one will. The one spirit controls the many members. Not otherwise is it with the Body of Christ. The one Holy Spirit has been given to all. The one Spirit inspires all, governs all, controls all, energizes all. We are all one man, one personality, in Christ Jesus.

'One body and one spirit.' Our English version, choice and rhythmical as it is, in this sentence 'darkens counsel' by the insertion of two little words not found in the Greek original. '*There is* one body and one Spirit,' declares the vernacular text: and truly it is so; but that is not quite what the Apostle wishes to say. His message is rather this—'I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called . . . one body and one spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.' He does not desire to say, I apprehend that there is 'one body and one Spirit.' No; he wishes them to live as 'one body and one spirit,' realizing in their daily being that oneness of heart and aim and life which alone can correspond with the wonderful unfolding of God's eternal purpose to sum up 'all that is' in His Son, Jesus Christ. 'One body and one spirit'—that is, one body animated by one informing spirit.

1. This unity, then, is what we have to realize. And truly the Christian Church (in spite of all belief in its essential 'one'-ness) has ever

[1] W. G. Tarrant, *Songs Devout*, 46.

found it hard, and even impracticable, to realize in deed this grand ideal. In the days of the Apostle it was hard to reconcile two diverse elements that, for century on century, had stood defiant, confronted in truceless opposition—the Jew, with his pride of faith and exclusive revelation; the Gentile, with his pride of power, his pride of intellect, and his easy-going indifference to all that was non-material. To St. Paul, beyond all others, it was given (in God's Providence) to bridge this prodigious gulf, to surmount this forbidding barrier, to see that in Christ the dividing wall was gone, the discord swept away. And who knows but that the sight of Rome's majestic unity in the sphere of the earthly polity not least enabled him to grasp the great conception of the 'oneness' of the Church in Christ her Head? But, however that may be, in his age, and in all ages, there was, and ever is, a constant tendency to set aside the vision as too great and too magnificent to be achieved by man. We dare not lift our eyes to the eternal hills; we dare not face the splendour of man's God-given destiny. Instead we shroud and veil them, or bend them to the earth, and live as men and women to whom was never vouchsafed a vision so uplifting, an ideal so Divine.

2. Three ways in which we may seek to realize this unity are: (1) in unity of life, (2) in unity of service, and (3) in unity of worship.

(1) *Unity of Life.*—Find Christians where you will, they will be men of one unmistakable character; men with affections set 'on things above, not on things on the earth'; men with constant aspirations after a better life which no experience of failure can daunt; men ceaselessly longing to be purer and meeker, and more thoughtful and more tender, and helped in wonderful ways towards the accomplishment of their desires. We shall know them by the sanctity of their souls, by the love that inspires them, by the deep sense of sin they cherish, by the reverence for righteousness and the constant regard for God which lend at once elevation and sobriety to their character. They are men who have the stamp of Christ upon them—feebly and imperfectly it may be, yet really there—showing itself in their judgment of present things, and the hopes they cherish for the future. This broad line distinguishes the Christian from the unchristian life; and this is the working of the Spirit.

¶ Nothing on earth is so beautiful as the genuine Christian character. Sir James Stephen was an avowed agnostic; but he confessed that no society of unbelievers would be able to produce the tone and temper of noble sanctity which he himself had admired in a Christian like Frederick Denison Maurice. Such a character surpasses every other pattern, because it reflects the likeness of Him who descended out of heaven from God.[1]

(2) *Unity of Service.*—Christians have 'one Lord,' towards whom they cherish one 'faith.' Our Lord is one, and His service is the same. He inspires in all the same feeling. Confessions differ, but one Christian faith is striving to utter itself in all. The battle-cries may vary, but the song of victory, 'Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,' is one. The actual work of Christians is the same—to bring the world unto God. Their message is the same—'As ambassadors for Christ, we beseech you to be reconciled to God.' The same gratitude inspires them—'We love him, because he first loved us'; and their satisfaction and joy are this alone, that Christ 'shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied'; that Christ shall reign from sea to sea, and be enthroned in every heart.

¶ During his tour in England (in 1894) Dr. Paton was invited by the Bishop of Durham—the late Bishop Westcott—to visit him at Auckland Castle. Both of the men of God who then met are gone, and we can speak more freely of the event. The Bishop received his Presbyterian brother as wholeheartedly as if he had been one of his own clergy. The Missionary on his part was profoundly moved by the visit, and told his friend subsequently how the Bishop had led him away to his study,

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 83.

and there discussed, with evident eagerness of soul, the progress and hopes of the evangelisation of the heathen in the Islands and in the world. Then they knelt together before God —those two warriors who, in such different fields and circumstances, had fought their great fight and wellnigh finished their course. They recognized that they were one in heart and purpose, and each poured out his soul in fervent petition for the other, and for the bringing in of the kingdom of God.[1]

(3) *Unity of Worship.*—'One God and Father of all, who is over all'—Sovereign Ruler, wise Director, tender Preserver; 'and through all'—revealing Himself in the course of Providence, not far from every one of us; and 'in all'—upholding all things by the word of His power, working out His own eternal counsel. We have not an unknown God; he that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father. We know Him to be righteous in all His works, holy in all His ways, a God of truth and without iniquity, with no respect of persons. He is the Father of spirits, rich in mercy to all who call upon Him. To worship is to perceive His excellence and to love Him for it; to be strengthened by communion with Him, calmed by submission to Him. We see but 'a portion of His ways,' and often err by reasoning from this as if we understood the whole. Here is the source of divisions—our attempt to explain all God's dealings; we are united when we come to hold communion with Himself. Calvinist and Arminian dispute when they would draw up a scheme of human life; they are at one in their reverence for the Righteous and the Loving One; their words of adoration, the obedience of their lives, are the same. One man loves to surround his worship with symbols, seeks to lift up his soul by the help of music and the adornments of art. Another loves the strictest simplicity, and cuts off all sights and sounds that might draw his thoughts away from the unseen God. But the object of Christian worship is the same. It is to the all-holy, the all-good One, to the God and Father of Jesus Christ our Lord, that Christians everywhere bow. They seek the presence of Him who 'is a spirit'; and strive to 'worship him in spirit and in truth.'

¶ In a very large social gathering in London some years ago, two gentlemen were speaking together of church matters. One of them criticised the church differences, and consequently, as he thought, the weakness of the Church. His friend asserted that these differences were largely on the surface and incidental; that underneath, at heart, there was a great unity among church people on the great essentials of the faith. The critic politely questioned the accuracy of his friend's remark.

At once the churchman called attention to the character of the large company gathered. It was representative of many different churches and of many walks of life. He said: 'At my request these people will all bow and reverently repeat the Lord's Prayer as a confession of their common faith.' And, securing the attention of all gathered, he explained the little pleasant dispute that had arisen with his friend, and made the request.

Instantly a soft hush fell over the lively company, and with bowed heads, and in a deep, low tone, which suggested a great wealth of suppressed feeling, they repeated reverently the Lord's Prayer. On no other one subject could there have been found such oneness of thought and such a depth of reverence. The subject of loyalty to their sovereign would have revealed as great oneness, but not the underneath depth of reverent feeling called out by loyalty to the higher Sovereign.[1]

[1] A. K. Langridge and F. H. L. Paton, *John G. Paton*, 52.

Church Membership.

Eph. iv. 4, 5.—'There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.'

1. WHAT St. Paul here calls the body we call the Church. What is the Church? It is the whole body of Christian people everywhere. In the fullest sense it takes in all Christian people that have ever lived, though most of

[1] S. D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Personal Problems*, 201.

them have been dead and forgotten for hundreds of years. It takes in all Christian people that are now living in every land on the face of the earth, speaking all manner of languages, worshipping God through Christ with all manner of differences. Unlike as they may be in the eyes of men, before God they are all one body, bearing the one name of His only begotten Son. This is a great thought—one that may well lift up the heart of every single Christian. Poor or weak or despised as he may be, he is an equal citizen of the mighty heavenly commonwealth; he is a member of Christ's own Body. 'We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another,' says St. Paul in Rom xii. He repeats the same more strongly in 1 Cor. xii., as in these words: 'As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.' 'Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.' And so all through the chapter. But St. Paul's doctrine on this subject may be seen best in his Epistle to the Ephesians, from which the text is taken, and which is all more or less written about the Church, even where the word itself does not appear. All through it he strives to make us understand that we, many though we be, are one body, filled with one Spirit, and that the true life which God gives us is one which we share together.

2. If once the true feeling of being members of one body took possession of our religion, what a change it would make in the spirit of our every-day lives! Not only would it make us happier and better men, because it would give strength and purity to our religion—that of course is true—but much more than that is true. Think how all our dealings with each other would be changed, if we kept steadily before our minds that all our neighbours are members of Christ's Body like ourselves. Think of the things which hold us apart from each other now. Think how we are jealous of this man because he has got something which we have not, how we hate another because perhaps he has done us once some trifling harm, and how perhaps we hate all his family for his sake. Think how often we look on most of those around us as rivals, almost as enemies, against whom we fancy ourselves obliged to keep up a struggle. Think how we secretly rejoice in the misfortune or mortifications of others, how ready we are to think the worst when their conduct is in question, how slow to put in a kindly word or lend a helping hand, unless it be for some particular friend. We know the temptations to all these things. How natural it is to indulge in them. These temptations would remain still, though we had a deeper sense of Church membership. The evil passions which make war in our hearts and members would still remain, would still trouble us and distract us. But how much easier it would be to resist them if we could learn to drown all our favourite reasons for separation in the one feeling that we are all alike members of the same Church, bound to forgive and forget, bound to help and cherish, bound, in one word, to love.[1]

The Church's Foundation.

Eph. iv. 5.—'One Lord, one faith, one baptism.'

In the words, 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism,' we have a formula revealing the way in which the Church is born, and grows, or, to change the figure, as the Apostle subsequently does, the way in which the Church is founded and built up.

1. The fundamental fact is indicated by the words, 'One Lord.' The reference is to Him in whom all the fullness of Deity dwelt corporeally, and in whom all the universal excellencies of humanity, according to the Divine plan and purpose, were included. We at once recognize that in Him a thousand, nay, a myriad glories meet in perfect strength and beauty. Because this is so, no one finite per-

[1] F. J. Hort, *Cambridge and Other Sermons*, 73ff.

son can possibly apprehend them all, and, therefore, the appeal He makes to human souls is as varied as their individualities. This does not need any argument, although we are sometimes in danger of forgetting it, and consequently of imagining that everyone must have the same apprehension of Him. That this is not so might be proved by a careful examination of the New Testament literature, in which we find different men presenting Him in different aspects of His One glorious Person. This is so in the Gospels, and accounts for their differences. It is so in the Epistles, and hence we have the Christ of Paul, of Peter, of John. It is also demonstrated by the different apprehensions of Him which characterize the experience of the saints in all the ages. The differences are not contradictory but complementary. A human Christ, a lesser Person, would command more perfect unanimity of opinion. Our differences of conception are due to the transcendent glories of the Person who is the One Lord.

¶ 'In the same living person,' writes the late Dean Church, 'each age has seen its best idea embodied; but its idea was not adequate to the truth—there was something still beyond. An age of intellectual confusion saw in the portraiture of Him in the Gospels the ideal of the great teacher and prophet of human kind, the healer of human error, in whom were brought together and harmonized the fractured and divergent truths scattered throughout all times and among all races. It judged rightly, but that was only part. The monastic spirit saw in it the warrant and suggestion of a life of self-devoted poverty as the condition of perfection. Who can doubt that there was much to justify it? Who can doubt that the reality was something far wider than the purest type of monastic life? The Reformation saw in Him the great improver, the breaker of the bonds of servitude and custom, the quickener of the dead letter, the stern rebuker of a religion which had forgotten its spirit. And doubtless He was all this; only He was infinitely more. And now in modern times there is the disposition to dwell on Him as the ideal Exemplar of perfect manhood, great in truth, great in the power of goodness, great in His justice and His forbearance, great in using and yet being above the world, great in infinite love, the opener of men's hearts to one another, the well-spring, never to be dry, of a new humanity. He is all this, and this is infinitely precious. We may "glorify Him for it, and exalt Him as much as we can; but even yet will He far exceed". That one and the same form has borne the eager scrutiny of each anxious and imperfect age, and each age has recognized with boundless sympathy and devotion what it missed in the world, and has found in Him what is wanted. Each age has caught in those august lineaments what most touched and swayed its heart. And as generations go on and unfold themselves they still find that character answering to their best thoughts and hopes; they still find in it what their predecessors had not seen or cared for; they bow down to it as their inimitable pattern, and draw comfort from a model who was plain enough and universal enough to be the Master as of rich and poor, so of the first century and the last.'

2. The connecting fact of human volition is that of the *one faith.* As we have said, there are a thousand, nay, a myriad conceptions of the Christ due to His infinite glory and to the finite nature of the human mind. The conception of Christ which appeals is largely the result of temperament, circumstances, need. The amazing glory of Christ is seen in the fact that He does appeal to the most diverse temperaments in all sorts of circumstances, and with regard to every conceivable need. When the Apostle speaks here of One Faith, he is not referring to one Creed, as a human opinion, but to one Confidence, which expresses itself in one submission. The one faith is simply that of the perfect confidence in the One Lord which produces the actual and definite surrender of the soul to Him without bargaining, and without reserve.

3. So, lastly, we come to the final fact of the *one baptism,* which is the response of

grace to the faith of the soul. It is the act of God the Holy Spirit, wherein the trusting soul is brought into living union with the Lord in whom faith confides. It is the act by which that soul dies to the things which are contrary to the Lordship of Christ, and rises into the conscious powers of that Lordship. Here again let us clearly recognize that the consciousness is infinite in variety. Broadly we may say that to some the consciousness is supremely that of death unto life, while to others it is that of life unto death. To some the ever-increasing joy of the years is that of the break with the old, which was the result of their faith and the Spirit's baptism. The sense of freedom from the old galling yokes, of the quenching of evil fires, of the rolling away of intolerable burdens, is the passionate delight of new days. To some the illimitable spaciousness and infinite beauty of the new is the paramount experience. The putting back of horizons, the peopling of all spaces with new glories, is the perennial spring of ever-growing peace. The consciousness varies also according to temperament, circumstances, needs, as these are realized, governed, met. The unifying fact is that of the Spirit-life, which breaks with the past, and opens the gates of the future. By the One Baptism all temperaments are made to contribute to highest results, all needs are perfectly met. Thus the Church is created a spiritual unity. By the Spirit, One Lord is presented to the souls of men; in response to the Spirit, faith fastens upon the Lord presented; by the Spirit, believing souls are made one in life with the Lord in whom they confide, and so inevitably with each other.

One sole baptismal sign,
One Lord below, above,
Zion, one faith is thine,
One only watchword—love;
From different temples though it rise,
One song ascendeth to the skies.

Our sacrifice is one,
One Priest before the throne,
The slain, the risen Son,
Redeemer, Lord alone;
And sighs from contrite hearts that spring
Our chief, our choicest offering.

Head of Thy Church beneath,
The catholic, the true,
On all her members breathe,
Her broken frame renew;
Then shall Thy perfect will be done,
When Christians love and live as one.[1]

'Ever Busy, Yet Ever At Rest.'

Eph. iv. 6.—'One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all' (RV).

1. There is a well-known passage in the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, where he asks and answers the question, What is God? in a very impressive way. 'What art Thou then, my God?' he cries. 'Highest, best, most powerful, most omnipotent; most merciful and most just; most deeply hidden and yet most near. Fairest, yet strongest; steadfast, yet unseizable (incomprehensible); unchangeable, yet changing all things; never new, yet never old. . . . Ever busy, yet ever at rest; gathering, yet needing not; bearing, filling, guarding; creating, nourishing, and perfecting; seeking, though Thou hast no wants. . . . What can we say, my God, my life, my holy joy? Or what can anyone say who speaks of Thee?'

The most noticeable point in this beautiful description (apart from the intense feeling of love which pervades it) is the idea that runs through it that God is the reconciliation of opposites. His infinite attributes, in so far as they can be expressed at all, can be expressed only by statements which to our finite capacity appear to involve a contradiction. Take the phrase, 'Ever busy, yet ever at rest.' That represents two opposite conceptions of the nature of God, towards one or the other of which the human mind seems to move inevitably at different times.

On the one hand there is the answer of philosophy. Behind the fleeting world of sense philosophy has reached the idea of an Absolute Reality, a One, Eternal, Self-existent, Infinite

[1] G. Robinson.

Being, unconditioned and unknowable, and conceivable only through the medium of man's power of abstract reason.

On the other hand there is the answer of science. In so far as it gives an answer at all, science has reached a different conclusion. It has formed the idea of a great Force immersed in the world of matter, setting in motion all the operations of Nature, evolving life through all its stages and complex developments, itself the central law which regulates the working of the universe, itself the prime originating impulse, though known only to man through the effects which have resulted.

Christianity changes the whole situation. In the place of an impersonal Abstraction, Christianity puts a loving Father, to whose infinite majesty His children can turn, with awe indeed, but still with love and confidence; and in the place of an impersonal Force it puts an infinitely good and wise Creator, who sustains all created things by His providential care through the operation of general laws, which His lovingkindness by degrees enables us to discover.

The twofold aspect of God thus recognized by Christianity explains the meaning of St. Augustine's contrast, 'ever busy, yet ever at rest.' God is ever at work as Creator, Upholder, Sustainer of the universe and of man, yet ever existing apart from and independently of the forces which we see around us in Nature. That is the thought in St. Paul's mind when he speaks of 'one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all'—above all as the Transcendent, Eternal Father, who must never be confused with the universe which He has evolved, and on the other hand through all, as being immanent in the universe, the Word of Creation, the Source of physical law, the Providence that is always at work, not merely through the evolution of Nature but through the course of human history. 'Above all and through all.'

2. 'Ever busy, yet ever at rest'; 'Transcendent and yet Immanent.' We cannot deny the difficulty of reconciling these contradictions; yet we believe that reconciliation is possible. Christianity, in fact, feels the vital need of this reconciliation between pure Absolute Being and creative sustaining energy. A God who was entirely out of relation to the universe would be entirely beyond our reach, while on the other hand a God who existed merely in the universe would reduce the Christian creed to something undistinguishable from pantheism. St. Paul identifies the two aspects of God, viewed as both above all and through all, with the First and Second Persons of the Trinity. The Transcendent Father and the Son 'by whom all things were made' are only two manifestations of one and the same God; two Personalities, yet only One God. Our Father which is in heaven speaks to us by His Son, who has not merely created the world, but has regenerated human nature.

3. But if this were the whole of the Christian doctrine of God, would not the relations between God and man be after all incomplete. God means nothing to us if we cannot place ourselves in direct communion with Him. How then are we to reach Him, know Him, feel His presence? The answer is that we can do so only by virtue of our possessing within ourselves some portion of the Spirit of God. That is the thought which underlies St. Paul's third statement. He not merely exists apart from and above all, He not merely works through all, He also dwells in all. Like goes out to like. The Divine Spirit in man reaches out towards God. It finds God because it itself partakes of the nature of God. This Divine element in our human nature came forth from God and finds in God its ultimate goal. 'That which drew from out the boundless deep turns again home.' It proceeds from the Father through the Son, and from the Son to man; and through the Son it again returns to the Father, so that over and over again the eternal circle is completed 'from goodness, through goodness, to goodness.' Thus the indwelling of the Spirit is a corollary of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Light, Life, and Love. Our religion would become a very different thing from what it is now, if we

could make these three symbols of the Trinity more of a reality to ourselves. First, 'the Father of Lights,' as St. James calls Him, 'with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.' 'Father omnipotent,' says Milton.

Fountain of Light, Thyself invisible
Amidst the glorious brightness where Thou sittest
Throned inaccessible.

'Dominus illuminatio mea.' Secondly, the life-giving and life-sustaining Personality of the Divine Son—'Christ Who is our Life,' Christ Who came that we might have life abundantly, Christ Who tells us that He is 'the resurrection and the life.' And thirdly, that fire of Love which the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts. If only that flame burned brighter, then we should have no fear that our longings for the knowledge of God would ever remain unsatisfied: then through the Three Persons we should look up to the one God, and in the power of the Divine Majesty should be able to worship the Unity.[1]

The Resurrection and The Ascension.

Eph. iv. 8.—'When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive.'

It has often been said that the Ascension is implied in the Resurrection—that it is impossible to avoid assuming some such close to the period of our Lord's personal presence among men. However true this may be, there is that in the Scripture narrative of it which fancy could hardly have supplied. No eye saw when Christ burst the fastenings of the grave; but from Mount Olivet He rose while His disciples gazed up to heaven and still felt His blessing. Christ was raised from the dead by the operation of God's Spirit. He ascended, as it appears, by the exertion of His own will. There were no angels to carry Him from among men, as they carried the body of Moses; no chariot of fire to bear Him in a whirlwind, as Elijah was borne. A cloud received Him from the Apostles' sight, and He passed beyond the sphere of man's natural existence to the open presence of God.

1. The Ascension is related to the Resurrection as the triumph to the victory. The one is the ground of our hope: the other is the image of our glory. Christ not only conquered death, but He lifted mortality to heaven. He rose not only from the grave but from the earth. When, in the fervour of her joy, Mary would have clung to the Saviour who was restored to her, there came that touching rebuke: 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.' 'Seek not to hold Me by the power of human affection', the words seem to mean, 'for I must lead you to a higher life. Look on Me not only as the Master to whom you have ministered, but as the God who has saved you. Henceforth earth has no hold on Me, as its prince had no part in Me before.' Christ not only ascended up on high, He also led captivity captive.

These words St. Paul has adapted from the sixty-eighth Psalm. David is there speaking of the Mighty Conqueror—the God of Israel, their Guide from Egypt—before whom the powers of Nature and the might of kings gave way. His hosts have come back from the battle laden with spoil; He ascends His holy hill in triumph, and His enemies follow as captives in His train. So, too, Christ—the Head of our Christian body—is crowned as Conqueror. He has bound the strong man, and chained the powers of darkness, and put them to open shame. And yet more than this: not only has He subdued His enemies, but He has transformed them into His servants. Not only has He rescued man's body from corruption, but He has exalted it to heaven. That which was once the devil's is now taken by Christ to work His will. Captivity itself is made captive. Our bondage to sense is transformed into service to God.

2. In this respect it is that the thought of Christ's Ascension is to us unspeakably precious. It tells us that we shall rise again, and

[1] H. G. Woods, *At the Temple Church*, 122ff.

assures us that these bodies of ours shall not be lost, but be raised to God. It tells us that our home is not here, but in our Father's house; and that we—with all that makes us men—shall dwell there. And it is in this hope, full of joy and comfort, that we find the antithesis of our faith to all ancient systems. The wise man rejoiced that he was not tied to an immortal body; the Christian thanks God that *his* body will *live* for ever.

¶ Some weeks ago one of my most intimate friends passed into the larger life at the age of ninety-two and one-half years. He was one of the most cultured, forceful, keen-minded, unselfish and lovable men I ever knew, a poet, an orator, a writer of books that a generation ago were published in many languages, singularly beloved. Twelve days before the last call came, while amid great physical suffering, he said to a mutual friend what he had said to me many times during the fourteen years of our intimacy:

'I find myself full of the most intense curiosity to see the conditions of that life. What will it be to see God? Shall I really see Jesus Christ? Shall I meet in a tangible way friends I have loved? Shall I be interested, as I am now, in the doings of the world and the people here? *I am not in the least afraid of the answer to all these thoughts; I am just eager to have them answered.*'[1]

3. The Ascension has yet another lesson for us. We may not gaze up into heaven only to watch the Saviour as He leaves us: we must look there for the Judge who shall come again. Christ has indeed conquered sin, and has redeemed humanity, but as yet all things are not put under His feet. There is a creation groaning for a new birth, a kingdom yet to come, a Church to be cleansed from stains and healed from divisions. But it shall not always be so. There is a time appointed for the restitution of all things. The King shall return from the far country. The bridegroom, though He tarry, shall still come. The earth shall yet be the inheritance of the meek. The Son of Man shall hereafter be seen upon the clouds of heaven. He who spake through the prophets in old time still, indeed, speaks to His people. The Word still expresses the Father's message. But the 'Man Christ Jesus' has left His brethren for a season. He is present with us by His Spirit, present with us sacramentally, but in His humanity He is now seated at the right hand of God as our Mediator and Advocate. To borrow the Old Testament type, we are as the Israelites watching in the outer court—that symbol of the world—while our great High Priest has entered into the Holy of Holies—watching till He shall appear again surrounded by the glory of God's presence, to proclaim that the sacrifice is accepted and the atonement finished. His prophetic work is ended; His priestly office is even now being fulfilled; and day by day we pray that He may enter into His kingdom. How sincerely, how faithfully, how anxiously, our own consciences must answer.

Thy kingdom come, O God;
Thy rule, O Christ, begin;
Break with Thine iron rod
The tyrannies of sin.

Where is Thy reign of peace
And purity and love?
When shall all hatred cease,
As in the realms above?

When comes the promised time
That war shall be no more,
And lust, oppression, crime,
Shall flee Thy face before?

We pray Thee, Lord, arise,
And come in Thy great might;
Revive our longing eyes,
Which languish for Thy sight.[1]

The Gifts.

Eph. iv. 8.—'When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.'

WHAT were the gifts of the Ascended Christ?

1. It is said, first of all, that He led captivity captive. We may look upon that as the

[1] Doremus Scudder, *The Passion for Reality*, 96.

[1] L. Hensley.

first of His gifts. For to lead captivity captive means, in plain language, that He captured the prisoners, making happy captives of those who were the victims of a miserable captivity, emancipating them from the bondage in which they were held by bringing them into subjection to something better and worthier.

So long as Jesus lived in the flesh, His followers, notwithstanding all His endeavour to impress them differently, remained surrendered to false notions with regard to the Messianic kingdom and redemption. Though in daily communion with Him, they never rose above the current carnal imaginations about it; never ceased nursing fondly the dream of a temporal prince and political enfranchisement for Israel, counting eagerly on its fulfilment as the choicest blessing in store. Such was the ideal with which they started, and which continued to possess and rule them, in spite of the Master's often contradictory behaviour and utterances, and the purely spiritual aims on which He showed Himself intent.

It was thus with them until He died. Then gradually a great change took place in their views and sentiments. Their horizon expanded, they began to think and desire more nobly. It was not merely that, as a matter of course, His death destroyed the expectations they had previously cherished, but that, from thenceforth, a nobler passion seized them. They saw and embraced, as they had not done, a Christ who had been given to bring news of God, to reveal truth strengthening for duty, to communicate the secret of eternal life. They were captured by the vision of a spiritual redemption—a spiritual redemption, not for Jews only, but for peoples of all nations, for men everywhere. A new conception of Messianic power and Messianic blessedness awoke within them; a new enthusiasm was theirs, an enthusiasm for spreading light and righteousness.

¶ I admired lately a cluster of fine fruit-trees literally robed in blossoms. The old gardener, standing by, remarked, with a shrewd, complacent air, 'Well, sir, I might say that I gave them those.' And then, in answer to my questioning, he went on to tell me how for seasons the trees had borne scarcely anything, and how, at last, not content with pruning them above, he had pruned them also below, digging deep round them, and cutting in twain the long tap-root of each that struck down into coarse, sour soil, and drew from thence evil for the trees—so the old gardener represented it. 'And that, sir,' he said, 'is how I gave them these beautiful blossoms—just, you see, by setting them free from the coarse, sour soil beneath, to which the tap-root bound them.' Whether or no his notion was correct, it led me to consider what giving of gifts to men there may be, and often is, in just setting them free from something—from something unwholesome, mistaken, or wrong—to which they are in bondage.[1]

2. But if Christ gave something to the individual, He gave something also to the Church. Read the eleventh verse: 'He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.' It is not said that He left behind Him certain great institutions which He had built up and established, a whole machinery of offices and functions for carrying on His work and promulgating His religion. He had devised and prepared no system of things, arranging that there should be such and such departments of service—an apostolic department, a prophetical department, and so forth; appointing an order of evangelists and an order of pastors and teachers. He went away without making any arrangement of the kind. No hierarchy was founded or planned by Him. What He did leave behind Him, fashioned and shaped by His hand, was just that which the text intimates—men qualified and ready to labour in different capacities; men, out of whose several sanctified powers and faculties were gradually evolved the different offices and functions; men, some of whom had the gift of apostleship, some of whom took to prophesying and proved themselves prophets, some of whom became evangelists, some pastors and teachers.

[1] S. A. Tipple.

Here was the issue and fruit of Christ. A number of living souls, whom He had been slowly training, on whom at last He had succeeded in impressing Himself; a number of living souls, at last in fellowship with His mind, understanding and sympathizing with His aims, inspired with His Spirit. It may not have seemed much; but, what a grand achievement it was—how far-reaching and mighty in its results! Suppose that He had left as His issue and fruit a code of fine rules and regulations, a complete Church constitution, an elaborate system of divinity, and withal, no such quickened, consecrated men as these; would He ever have been so wondrously diffused abroad? But these few men whom He had imbued and inflamed, do we not know what they accomplished for Him—what their love and zeal accomplished for Him, with no Church constitution, and no system of divinity to begin with, and with the world arrayed against them?

¶ In the brief notes of the Christian movement furnished by St. Mark we find the key to the formation of the Church in a simple statement that Jesus 'chose twelve that they might be with Him,' accompanied by the gracious supplementary information of another Evangelist that He took them into one house, or home, with Him. 'These men,' says H. G. Woods, 'are chosen *to be with Jesus,* a phrase peculiar to Mark, which discloses the meaning of the secret of discipleship. Bousset rightly asks, "In which of the Old Testament prophets does personal intercourse with disciples, this gradual outpouring of the wealth of the soul into the souls of others, play such a part as it does in the case of Jesus?" ' This association is the law of the Church, and this home is the symbol of the Church. You cannot make the Church in any other way than by the attraction of men to Jesus Christ, and by their consequent association with one another in Him. Twelve men had found their Master and were prepared to call Him so; and He too, on His part, was prepared to be called so. 'You call me Master and you call me Lord,' said He, 'and there you are right.' We might describe it as a Round Table—only a round table has no head to it. In the Gospels it is more like a long table, perhaps like the table in Leonardo da Vinci's picture of the Last Supper; and Matthew's arrangement is very likely primitive, in which the twelve apostles enter in pairs, one on this side and one on that.

At all events, the disciples are there together, with their lives centralized.

> 'Throughout the universe of bliss,
> The centre, Thou, and Sun.'

That was true at the beginning, when one house would hold them all; but it still remained true as time went on. For instance, at the beginning of the second century, Aristides the Apologist wrote: 'We Christians count our genealogy from Jesus Christ, Who had twelve disciples who went out into all the world and discoursed of His majesty.' If Aristides had used modern language, he might have said: 'We Christians are a solar system. Considered separately, we are planets; considered in the totality, we are a system; we are individual believers, we are collectively an Ecclesia, a Church. Individually, we are the elect; taken together, we are the whole family in heaven and on earth.' [1]

¶ Get at a man, and send him from you into busy street and market-place, into the circle of which he is the centre, into the midst of his neighbours and friends with a greater spirit, with a breath of higher life in him, and who can tell what good you have not started and provided for in doing that?—who can predict whereunto that may not grow?—you have wrought, anyhow, for once in your life, an immortal work. The noblest sculptures and pictures will perish; the noblest utterances, the noblest poems may be forgotten; but any purifying or elevating effect which they have had upon a human soul—that remains and dies not until the heavens be removed.[2]

[1] J. Rendel Harris, *As Pants the Heart,* 204.
[2] S. A. Tipple.

Christ's Gifts.

Eph. iv. 8:—'He gave gifts unto men.'

Who else has given gifts to men? It is expressly made the glory of the Hindu god Brahma that he gives no gifts—

> God, that art above the show
> Of the worlds that come and go,
> God, that art all things we know,
> God, that art their overthrow,
> God that art above, below,
> God of æons' ebb and flow,
> God, with nothing to bestow,
> That art all things—be it so![1]

1. One of Christ's gifts is *life:* 'I give unto them eternal life.' Man longs for life. He wants a fuller existence. He would leave his low-vaulted past, and build for his soul more stately mansions. This desire has taken many forms, from that of the young man who vaguely wants to 'see life,' to that of the other young man who asked, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' Our Lord's promise does not merely mean immortality, though it includes it. It means life on a higher plane—life hid with Christ in God. It means fellowship with God, and participation in His nature. It unfolds the idea dimly present to Abigail's mind when she said to David, 'The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God.' Crown of life, bread of life, water of life, tree of life, all mean life with and in God. 'He that hath the Son hath life.'

¶ Christianity is distinguished above all other religions by its offer of a larger life to men. The Master announced that this was the purpose of His advent: 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' Other teachers have come calling to their fellows to abandon the hope of life and seek the negation of unconsciousness. He offers a larger life: not merely a larger hope for the future, but a present participation in an ever more abundant life, growing in its capabilities to meet the stress of this world, just because it lives and gains its strength from sources beyond and above it in the realms of the spirit. It brings new visions, new aspirations, new joys, new powers, and ever larger life.[1]

2. Another gift is *rest:* 'I will give you rest.' If one half of the world longs for life, the other half longs for rest. Every morning brings the one desire, every evening the other. An Irish legend tells of the two islands of life and death. Men first preferred the one where death could not enter; but, finding it full of pain, gradually forsook it for the other. 'They launched their barks upon its gloomy waters; they touched its shore and they were at rest.' But Jesus will not have us give up life in order to have rest. The rest He offers is inward, not outward. What He gives is not a new lot, but a new method of bearing the old. He bids us take His yoke upon us and learn of Him. By becoming meek and lowly in heart, as He is, we shall find rest unto our souls.

> When days are dark and nights are cold,
> And all the world seems going wrong;
> When fears are fresh, and hopes grow old,
> And die because they've waited long;
> When all is sad without, within,
> And I am plagued with doubt and sin,
> Yet have I comfort, and rejoice
> If I can hear the Master's voice.
>
> Come unto Me, thou child distressed;
> Come, find a refuge on My breast;
> Lay down thy burden, and have rest.[2]

3. Another gift is *peace:* 'My peace I give unto you.' This may be said to unite the former two. Without peace, life is but misery and rest is only danger. The Hebrew word for peace denotes completeness, security, well-being. It is to the soul what health is to the body. Hence it often formed part of a saluta-

[1] E. Wingfield-Stratford, *India*, 65.

[1] *The Spirit of Man*, Selected Essays from '*The Times*,' ii. 93.

[2] Henry Van Dyke.

tion. 'Peace be unto you.' 'Peace on earth.' 'Peace be to this house.' No doubt there are forms of peace which are not worth having. Peace needs to be both honourable and lasting. Jovian concluded with the Persians a peace dishonourable to the Roman name. The 'perpetual peace' between Scotland and England was broken only a few years later by the battle of Flodden. It was not without reason that our Lord added the words, 'Not as the world giveth.' It is easy to patch up peace of a kind by conforming to the world's level. But that is not Christ's way: His peace is of a different order. It ends with the world, but it begins with God. His peace is an inward grace, a fruit of the Spirit, a gift of the Prince of Peace.

¶ I know no more intellectually of the *Truth* than when I first believed; but what a result comes from its abiding! A deeper, deeper happiness absorbs the heart and pervades the soul. A deepening calm rules and assimilates the faculties, and compels them into action; not excitement, but definite and proper action.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, which baffles analysis, which has an infinitude of depth about it. As you cannot understand remote stars, nor the overhanging vault which you cannot at all explore, but can only feel as you feel your life, so you cannot touch this Peace of God with your understanding. It lies round you like an atmosphere. It dwells in you like a fragrance. It goes from you like a subtle elixir vitæ.[1]

4. Yet another gift is *love*. The real gift of life is a soul like ourselves—the coming of a friend with a heart of love to open the fountains of joy within us:

Long the road,
  Till love came down it.
Dark the life,
  Till love did crown it.
Dark the life
  And long the road
Till love came
  To share the load!

[1] *Letters of James Smetham*, 81.

For the touch
  Of love transfigures
All the road
  And all its rigours.
Life and death
  Love's touch transfigures.
Life and death,
  And all that lies
In between
  Love sanctifies.

Life is enriched, purified, uplifted by the entrance of another life into ours.

¶ When Montaigne wrote his essay on Friendship, he could do little but tell the story of his friend. It is a chapter of his heart. There was an element of necessity about it, as there is about all the great things of life. He could not account for it. It came to him without effort or choice. It was a miracle, but it happened. 'If a man should importune me to give a reason why I loved him, I can only answer, because it was he, because it was I.' It was as some secret appointment of heaven. They were both grown men when they first met, and death separated them soon. 'If I should compare all my life with the four years I had the happiness to enjoy the sweet society of this excellent man, it is nothing but smoke; an obscure and tedious night from the day that I lost him. I have led a sorrowful and languishing life ever since. I was so accustomed to be always his second in all places and in all interests, that methinks I am now no more than half a man, and have but half a being.'[1]

5. Finally, the best gift of Christ is *Christ Himself*. Others have said, 'Accept my teaching'; Christ said, 'Accept Me.' God gave His only-begotten Son; the Son gave His life a ransom for many. He gives Himself to us, moreover, as a perpetual presence, in His Holy Spirit. Let any real Christian put to Himself the question, 'Where would I be without Christ?' and he will have some idea as to what that Gift means.

[1] H. Black, *Friendship*, 10.

'What can I spare?' we say:
'Ah, this and this,
From mine array
I am not like to miss:
And here are crumbs to feed some hungry one:
They do but grow a cumbrance on my shelf:'—
And yet, one reads, our Father gave His Son,
Our Master gave Himself.[1]

Incarnation and Ascension.

Eph. iv. 10.—'He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.'

1. He descended. He came down. The reference is undoubtedly to the Incarnation, to the lowly birth in Bethlehem's stable. And what a descent it was! The Incarnation has become so commonplace a notion that we have almost ceased to feel the stupendous wonder of it! The Eternal Word became flesh! The Son of God became a man! He laid His glory by; He submitted to be born; He condescended to the low estate of the little child; He became subject to the rule of an earthly father and mother; He endured all the weaknesses and pains and temptations and limitations of our human nature. There was an amazing and immeasurable outpouring of glory and power when the Eternal Christ became Mary's little child. To be born at Bethlehem Jesus descended, He came down!

(1) He descended to become a man! But even amongst men He descended, He went down. It would have been an immeasurable descent from the glory of the Eternal God even to the best and highest and noblest that human nature could give! But it was not amongst the rich and the great and the noble that Christ appeared; He went down and had His portion among the poor. If He had been born in the halls of the great, if He had made His first earthly appearance in the palace of the Cæsars, with every earthly luxury surrounding Him and an obsequious throng of servants to minister to His needs, it would still have been a measureless descent from that heavenly state in which He enjoyed equality with God. But it was not in Cæsar's palace or in any rich man's hall that Christ was born, and there were no servants by to minister to Him when His infant cry was first heard. There was no home to give Him shelter when He made His appearing. There was no room for Him in the inn. So His first cradle was a manger, and His first nursery a stable.

(2) And that does not complete the story of Christ's descent. He descended, Paul says, 'into the lower parts of the earth.' That may mean only 'this lower earth' in contrast to heaven. But it may also mean, as many commentators suggest, death and the grave and hell. Our Lord went as low as ever He could go. He plumbed the deepest depths of human experience. He went down into the valley of humiliation and shame. He went down to the contradiction of sinners and the level of their scorn. He went down to death and the grave and Hades. He descended to the lower parts of the earth! He 'emptied himself'—to revert to that other great word of the Apostle's—when He took upon Him 'the form of a servant,' and was 'made in the likeness of men.'

(3) But the climax of the emptying came when He became 'obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross.' Think of Him, to begin with, on the Father's throne, then see Him hanging on the Cross of shame and buried in Joseph's rocky grave. What an immeasurable descent it represents! We can sum up our Lord's life in this one phrase: 'He went down.' Bethlehem began it, Calvary completed it.

¶ There is nothing else like this descent, nothing which we can match against it and compare with it, in history or legend or poet's dream. In human experience, indeed, we find examples of men coming down from the high places to the low places of the world. For the most part they do it reluctantly, out of compulsion—through some sudden accident, or calamity, or ruin. A man, for instance, who has moved in exalted circles forfeits caste and character; he sinks down to hide in obscurity,

[1] F. Langbridge, *Little Tapers*, 34.

and begins with shame to take the lowest seat. Sometimes we witness tragic humiliations such as these: the famous singer starves in a garret, the bankrupt millionaire takes refuge in a workhouse, the faithless prophet dies in a gaol.

Yet again, there may be condescension which is voluntary and deliberate—as when a clever man adapts himself to dull wits; or a teacher simplifies his thoughts and words for his simplest pupils; or a father and mother humble their minds to match the mind of their little child.

And we may find nobler instances still among the disciples of Him who descended. The imitation of Christ has not died out. There are Christians who have joyfully followed their Master in this, and have gone down after Him into the depth of poverty and misery for the sake of the bodies and spirits which are imprisoned there. High-bred men and women have left empty the chief seats in the synagogues, and deserted the uppermost rooms at the feasts, and resigned the best society and the finest culture. They have done this so that they might live among the ignorant, and make friends with the lowly, and comfort the sorrowful, and become of no reputation for the sake of the disreputable, and be kind to the unthankful and the evil.[1]

2. He ascended. Descent is not the last word in the life of Christ: 'He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.' First He came down, and then He went up. First He stooped to lowliness and shame, and then He soared into exaltation and glory. We rejoice that He 'descended.' We rejoice that He came down to Bethlehem and that He did not shrink from going down into shame and death and the deep night. But Bethlehem, and the carpenter's shop, and the seamless robe, and Calvary's Cross, and Joseph's rocky tomb—they do not tell the whole story of the life of Christ. They tell how He came down. But 'he that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, *that he might fill all things.*' That is the meaning of the Ascension. The once lowly Jesus took His seat at the right hand of the majesty of God. The Man whom the Jews cast out is now the adored of saints and angels. The Man who in His hour of agony and shame had no one to own Him or befriend Him is now in the place of supreme authority and dominion.

The Head that once was crowned with thorns
Is crowned with glory now.

That is the Christ whom in these days we specially need to see. Our chief striving during recent years has been to rediscover the historic Jesus, the Jesus who lived and walked and preached and spoke in Galilee of old. It was a task that needed doing. But it has not been without its perils. The historic Jesus has to some extent hidden from us the *exalted Christ.* For it is not the meek and lowly Jesus of nineteen centuries ago who is going to lead us to victory, but the living and glorious Lord. What we need to remember in order to shake us out of all our pessimism and despair is not simply that Jesus came down, but that He *went up;* that Calvary did not end His life, but that He took captivity captive, and lives victorious to give every needful gift of grace to men. Let us remember that He who descended is the same also that ascended. Let us remember our glorified, exalted, triumphant Lord! Let us think of Him as already on the throne! Let us think of Him as already possessed of supreme authority! Let us think of Him as in the fight. Then we shall cease to be terrified by the foes that confront us. We shall go into the fight confident of triumph, for 'he that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.'[1]

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible,* 98.

[1] J. D. Jones.

The Work of the Ministry.

Eph. iv. 11-13.—'And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

This passage is full, as indeed the whole chapter is full, of the most profound wisdom concerning the Church and its functions and functionaries. Let us single out three of the more simple and obvious suggestions which arise from it.

1. In the first place, the Apostle draws our attention to what—in his time, at any rate—was a very remarkable phenomenon, namely, the extraordinary variety of form which the Christian ministry had already taken. Not much more than thirty years had elapsed since the first formation of a Christian congregation. No one and complete generation had passed away since the Church of Christ was founded. Yet already the Apostle looks round upon the various churches, of many of which he had been the founder, and he sees everywhere, not merely one type of minister, but all the various types which are enumerated in our text.

(1) Some were specifically apostles, those whom to-day we call missionaries, their business being to go away from the place where Christians had been already gathered together, and to proclaim to an unknowing and heathen world the knowledge of the grace of God.

Pre-eminently, Jesus Himself is 'the Apostle of our profession,' sent directly from the Father, into the world. After Him, those are apostles who directly by Himself are called and qualified to represent Him. They are the princes of the kingdom of heaven, having close and immediate relationship with the Lord. There may be little that is striking about them. They are rather simple, honest men than men of great parts, but they are channels of grace to all nations.

¶ Livingstone was a great apostle, perhaps the greatest apostle of modern times. Livingstone was never meant to be a settled and stationary missionary. The love of adventure was in his blood, the call of the beyond was ever ringing in his ears, and no single mission station could contain him. Livingstone's gift was not that of his great father-in-law, Robert Moffat. Moffat was a pastor. Livingstone was born to be a pioneer, an apostle, one who was always on the move, facing endless journeyings, countless dangers, and measureless distresses in his Master's cause. He was an apostle of Paul's own type. Paul himself was a tremendous traveller. He never heard of a new country without wishing to travel thither to tell its people the story of his crucified Redeemer. And David Livingstone stood in the direct line of succession to St. Paul. He tramped 29,000 miles through the swamps and forests of unknown Africa, amid difficulties and dangers that would have broken the spirit of ordinary men; and this was why he did it, that he might bring to the peoples of that Dark Continent the good news of the grace of God in giving His Son to save the world. We miss the central significance of David Livingstone's life and work when we speak of him as a traveller, a geographer, an explorer. David Livingstone was an apostle.[1]

(2) He sees also prophets, who were men and—let us never forget it—women, also called, not so much to visit and evangelize the outside world as to go round from one community of Christians to another and to stir up the grace that was in them. Their business was less that of expounding and instructing than that of stimulating and inspiring.

Prophets are men who speak from a Divine impulse, rather than from their own thought, or wisdom. A man may occasionally be the medium of a Divine utterance, and yet be neither a representative man, nor a teacher. Prophets are irregular men. At times they are in a very lofty mood, they see visions, they hear the voice of God; but they are ill adapted for the routine of ordinary service. One cannot depend upon them. They will not come under the yoke of established methods.

[1] C. A. Scott.

(3) Some also he calls evangelists—men whose business it was to rehearse in the hearing of the people the story of Jesus Christ, and to instruct them by a kind of catechetical method in the life, teaching and deeds of the Master.

Evangelists are matter-of-fact men. The facts of the Gospel are their all in all. They are admirably fitted to rouse the attention of plain unsophisticated persons. For the African mind, for instance, they are all that one could desire: to the philosophical Hindu they are useless. In the work of awakening simple men from their sleep in sin they are perfectly at home; but as pastors and teachers they are unfitted.

(4) But besides these there were those whom he describes as pastors and teachers—men, that is to say, who did not travel, and whose business was concentrated upon one particular congregation, shepherding it as a flock and educating it in the Christian faith.

Pastors and teachers are rather architects and builders than quarrymen, or gatherers of raw material. It is as distinctly our Lord's will that Christians should grow in grace and knowledge as that sinners should be converted. Some, therefore, are adapted to arouse and convert men, and others to educate the converted. Men may be brought to Christ, and yet be very imperfect men. They are in Christ, but not grown up into Christ. In most of them their own sinful nature is much more active and prominent than their new nature. Adam is very strong in them, and Christ very weak. The new man in them is but a mere germ, without development. They require much teaching and much grace to make them 'meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' The invisible power of Christ, and His visible gifts in the Church, are in co-operation 'for the perfecting of the saints.' An endless variety of ministry is provided for this end.

2. What is the purpose of the ministry? Here we have this great variety of gift and function concentrated under modern conditions in one person—what is the object of it? The final purpose for which the Church exists is that we all may come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; the intermediate purpose is the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ. What do these things mean? They do not mean merely what they seem to mean on the surface of our New Testament translation.

(1) *The perfecting of the saints.*—The word 'saint' does not necessarily mean a perfect man. Those who are spoken of in the New Testament as saints are God's people—people who have begun to be saints (using the word here in its ordinary sense). Nor is the word 'perfecting' exactly equivalent to the idea usually associated with the word in our modern speech. The word is identical with that which is used in another part of the New Testament, when it is said of the fisher-disciples that they were mending their nets. It expresses the action of the fisherman in gathering up the broken ends of the web and knotting them. The perfecting of the saints is not the 'making good' of individual saints; it is the gathering up and fitting together of the various 'saints' that make up the Christian congregation.

(2) *The work of the ministry.*—When this harmonizing work has been done, and even while it is being done, it will show its own result and consequence in the work of the ministry. The phrase here has nothing to do with the work of the Ministry—using the capital 'M.' What is meant here is the work of ministry and mutual service. The Apostle is trying to describe that mutual interdependence and interaction of all the forces which form part of the ideal Christian life, and he is only taking us one stage further when he gives us as the third form of this intermediate purpose of the Church and of the ministry.

(3) *The edifying of the body of Christ.*—The word 'edifying' is one which ought almost to be banished from our speech. It has been so spoiled and 'pawed over' during the last century by writers of books of edification and the like. The great conception that lies behind this word is of supreme importance for our

Christianity. It relates to the idea of the body of Christ which the Apostle is trying to set before us. The word 'edify' means simply the building up of that body. Words and figures of speech break down in the attempt to describe this spiritual process. We cannot build up a body—the metaphor fails at once—but the Apostle is seeking through the language of metaphor to make us understand that one intermediate result of this manifold ministry is the bringing about of the one body of Christ. The members of His Church are to be considered not as independent units, but as men and women who are to be brought together as the several members of the body might be brought together—here a hand, there a finger, here an eye and there a foot. Each one of us is to remain the kind of man he has been, to conserve his type, to fulfil his function, to act up to the level of his abilities and capacities, and at the same time to consecrate it all to the service of Christ and to be knit with others in a common bond.

(4) *The fulness of Christ.*—The final purpose is: 'Till we all come . . . unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,' or, as it might be translated, 'the mature stature of Christ.' Many of us are under a misapprehension as to the meaning of that opening phrase, 'Till we all come.' It does not mean 'Until each of us comes to the measure of the stature of Christ.' There is no authority in Scripture or in the Holy Spirit for the ascription we sometimes hear expressed, 'Let us all be little Christs.' The Apostles were far too full of reverence for, and had far too exalted a conception of, their Lord and Master ever to suggest a thing like that. What they did realize as possible was a more wonderful thing than that. They realized that we all together, being knit in one, might come to represent to the world a body which was equivalent in its effect and influence to the presence of Christ. That is to say, this body is not to remain in the condition in which it was first formed; it is to grow. Paul presses his metaphor boldly. He thinks of this body as though at first it were the body of a little child, which grows by the Word until it becomes the body of the mature man, when the world opens its eyes in amazement as it sees something that suggests the Christ.

¶ How sweetly the weight of each planet is balanced against all the forces which are ceaselessly acting upon her. Instead of being oppressed thereby, she is carried by them, and glides, and blooms, and sings on her way, enjoying the rest of existence, as one who is delivered from the sense of her own weight. Much more will all things, in each member of Christ, be balanced into nicest harmony with all things in the whole body. Every member will be supported by all the members, and all the members by Christ and the Father. The joy of the 'Perfect Man' will sing through each individual. Every one will be 'perfect in Christ Jesus'; but the whole number will constitute the 'Perfect Man,' the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.[1]

Unity.

Eph. iv. 13.—'The unity of the faith.'

We hear much in these days of Christian unity, and many councils and programmes are proposing to heal the differences which divide the Church, and to attain what the Apostle calls the 'unity of the faith.' Sometimes this unity is sought by the way of conquest, and one communion undertakes to absorb or repress all others. It does not seem likely, however, that this absorption or repression will succeed. Different aspects of teaching will, it seems probable, continue to attract different types of mind. Again, this unity is sought by the way of legislation, and ecclesiastical conventions vote terms of agreement and discriminate between the essentials and non-essentials of unity. The more, however, they debate, the more they call attention to forgotten points of difference, and the further they seem to be from Christian unity. How, then, is this dream of the unity of the faith to be realized?

It must be reached, according to St. Paul, not by absorption, or by legislation, but by

[1] J. Pulsford.

growth. Speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head. It is not a unity which can be patched up, but one into which we must grow up. It is not a matter of deliberation, but a matter of elevation. The divisive elements of religion are below, like the underbrush in the valley over which one cannot see. Get above this level and the view is clear. Christian controversy thrives in the malarious jungle of the lower ground, and as men get on higher ground, they not only breathe more easily, but they get together, not by compromise or concession, but because they are attaining unto the perfect man.

Here is the reason for the curious fact that there is no heresy or schism in a hymn-book. Persons who would not perhaps be permitted to worship together become through their hymns participants in common worship, and their names stand side by side on the same page. With no sense of concession or compromise we sing the hymn of Wesley the Methodist, Newman the Anglican, and Whittier the Quaker. It is because all of them dwell on the heights. The unity which their hymns illustrate is not one of agreement, but one of attainment. It is not that they have assented to one opinion, but that they have ascended to one view.

¶ The religious life is like climbing a mountain from different sides. Below there is limitation, obstruction, division. One cannot see far, and his neighbour calls to him and is not heard. 'Follow me,' one says to another; 'I have found the only path,' but meantime the other is pressing up what seems a better way. As each gets higher, however, he sees farther, and the paths converge, and when at last each approaches the top, he approaches his neighbour, and on the summit it is all one view, and it is a view all round.[1]

[1] F. G. Peabody, *Mornings in the College Chapel*, ii. 222.

The Christian Ideal.

Eph. iv. 13.—'A fullgrown man . . . the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

Mrs. Humphry Ward wrote: 'There is no approaching the ideal for the masses except through the human life—through one much loved, much trusted soul, to some eternal verity.' This is not only correct touching the masses, it is true also of the rarest minds; and the Incarnation is Heaven's gracious concession to this organic need of our nature. The unembodied, the invisible, the diffused moral ideal is mental moonshine that warms and ripens nothing; the moral ideal in Jesus Christ is as when the sun goes forth in his strength—it calls forth the response of our moral sense, it enthuses the heart, evokes the will, stirs, energizes, and perfects the whole personality. Through that much loved, much trusted One we come to eternal verity.

1. *The loftiness of the ideal.*—'The stature of the Christ.' The thought of the highest conceivable goodness is here. The Apostle had no conception of a perfection transcending that of our Lord. He felt that his Master had given the ages a type of character that was unique, and that His doctrine of righteousness was incomparable. But to-day it has become fashionable to sneer at the New Testament ideal of conduct as lacking elevation, and its censors affect to discover purer and loftier principles. It is not irrelevant to ask how it has come to pass that these theories of a superfine virtue should be forthcoming so liberally in these later days. The simple explanation of the presence amongst us to-day of these excelling moralists is that Jesus Christ has raised immensely the conception of human nature, and kindled an enthusiasm of righteousness of which the ancients knew nothing.

¶ An old legend relates that once the birds agreed to have a king, and they resolved that the bird which flew the highest should wear the crown. The cunning wren, reckoning that the strength of the eagle would prevail,

perched itself on the eagle's back; and when the royal bird reached its last point of ascension, up went the wren into a height yet beyond. If it is asked how our secular rationalistic moralists came to attempt the thin air of an unaccustomed heaven, the answer is clear—on the eagle wings of the Christian faith. These attempts, however, to surpass the Christian standard have not justified themselves. What became of that wren does not appear; but the ambitious speculative moralist has certainly not sustained his flight. The New Testament conception of holiness marks the extreme limit of practical conduct.

2. *The fullness of the Christian ideal.*—'Unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' The fullness of Christ as a revelation of humanity is a favourite theme with St. Paul. Whatever pertains to the perfection of human nature and the completeness of human life is found in our Lord expressly or potentially. A recent writer[1] asks this question: 'Of all the men that have lived can we name a single one in whom the spirit of all humanity has dwelt?' And, replying to his own query, he proceeds, 'Even of the Prophet of Nazareth it was possible for so devout a man as Carlyle to say, with regret, "There is no Falstaff in Him." ' Can we name a single one in whom the spirit of all humanity has dwelt? Yes. 'The Son of Man.' And one of the most convincing proofs of His universality, that He was the 'synthetic man,' the gatherer and revealer of all the powers of humanity, is found in the fact that His hostile critics produce no charge against Him except that they find 'no Falstaff in Him!' As though He who was for our advantage nailed to the bitter cross were to amuse us also! There is something positively wanton in expecting the elements of humour in Him who came on the serious business whose symbol is the Cross. How perfect must He be in whom His adversaries can find no fault but this!

Our religion is charged with neglecting certain sides of human nature, various spheres of human activity. It has little to say about health, pleasure, art, science, literature, government, industry, and other subjects of similar import. It is true that the New Testament says little about corporeal, mental, or artistic perfection, while it is copious and imperative on the question of conscience. It omits everything except the main thing. And was not our Lord right? Do we not, first of all, need to be saved from the blighting power of moral lawlessness? Is not the essential malady of the race here? Is not salvation from selfishness, irregular desire, ignoble passion, false aims, the primary need of the race? Just as a physician has little to say to his patients about beauty or music, politics or trade, but concentrates himself on the disease and peril of the sufferer, so the great Physician of the race concentrates Himself on the healing and health of the spirit. The world at its best is little to the sick; and all is nothing to a diseased and tortured soul. Let us, however, not forget that though our Master did omit various items of the worldly programme, He did not forbid or depreciate them. Nothing can be farther from the truth than to suggest that He did so. He simply taught that through the power of character we possess all things. Through personal godliness and spiritual righteousness we attain and retain all the glories of intellectual life, all the riches of material life, all the delights of social life. Our gospel brings us the heavenly wisdom, the inward peace, the power of pure living, the mighty hope, which enable us to possess our possessions, and to enjoy them for ever.

3. *The harmoniousness of the Christian ideal.*—'A fullgrown man, unto the measure of the fulness of Christ.' Nearly all the gifted writers who attempt a Life of Christ remark on the extreme difficulty of representing their subject because of the faultlessness and harmoniousness of His character—it being so much easier to depict the partial and irregular than to describe the smoothness of absolute perfection. All graces blended in the Master

[1] A. R. Orage.

in exquisite proportion; and whilst all feel the charm of His unearthly beauty, none may paint it. And, in truth, Christianity cannot be said to inculcate any special virtue, or to possess any distinguishing grace. The New Testament expression of holiness contains nothing defective or exaggerated; all fine features of character and action in just proportion compose its ideal.

> For where such various virtues we recite
> 'Tis like the Milky Way, all over-bright,
> But sown so thick with stars 'tis undistinguished light.

Completeness, plenitude, justness, constitute Christ-likeness.

¶ It was an artistic law in Greece that no victor in the games could have a portrait statue of himself set up unless he had been successful in all the five forms of contest, since anything short of success in all the five would leave open the possibility of certain parts of his body having been developed at the expense of others, owing to which it could not at the first glance present, as a perfect figure ought to present, that perfection of adaptability in all its parts to work harmoniously towards one end. As the Greek was thus anxious to secure the full and symmetrical development of the body, the faith of Christ, as set forth by St. Paul, is set upon the realization of our whole personality, in its utmost fullness and most delicate harmoniousness. If perfection is the harmonious expansion of *all* the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, who can study the New Testament without feeling that it contemplates the sanctification of all our powers; that Christianity is the study of perfection, and the secret of it?[1]

The Fullgrown Man.

Eph. iv. 13.—'Till we all attain unto . . . a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

With this inspiring word St. Paul awakens an ambition which must be latent in the heart of every man who is not incurably frivolous or hopelessly cynical, or whom the world has not spoiled. Whether it be his lot to be great or famous, it is surely his honest desire to be fullgrown in mind and in character, and, as he pities a deformed body, so he would not himself have a deformed soul. He desires to grow to his full height, and to make the best of himself, so that he may not miss the prize of life, or fail to do his tale of work. In a right and true sense, a man wishes and hopes to fulfil himself.

What he needs, and what we all need, is a wise master—one who can understand us through and through; one who sympathizes with us in aspirations which are hidden in our soul, in endeavours which have failed, in works which have gone astray; one who will not tyrannize over us, or crush us by his own authority and greatness, but will guide and encourage us; one who will set us an example of how a man should live, and how he should carry himself, how he ought to think, how he ought to feel; and one in such close fellowship with us, and yet so high above us in his nobility, that he will inspire us and move us unconsciously to higher things.

1. One Master only is sufficient. One Master only from youth till age has no extremes and no restrictions; One only in His character and life is proportioned and balanced, rounded and complete, the type of perfect manhood—the Man Christ Jesus, whose stature is the standard of manhood.

(1) For one thing, Jesus united in His character the benefit of two extremes, freedom and restraint. Sometimes we are in a natural mood, rejoicing in the beauty of the world, in the fellowship of human life, in the richness of God's gifts, in the pleasures of art and literature, in the gaiety of fellowship. We are inclined to let ourselves go and to drink the cup of life's wine to the dregs. At other times we are in a spiritual mood, fearful of the poison in many a fair blossom, watchful of the temptations which seem to us like snakes in the green grass, mindful of the hideous dangers of excess, and determined to crush

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Fatal Barter*, 182ff.

the flesh, lest the flesh should lead the soul captive. There are days when we own to a frank paganism. There are days when we cultivate a fierce asceticism. We are tossed to and fro between Athens and Jerusalem, desiring one day to be a Greek, and the next to be a Jew. We turn to Jesus, and find in Him no conflict of moods, no irreconcilability between warring extremes. He went to the feasts of publicans, but left them better men. He loved the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, but His gladness in Nature did not turn Him from the Cross. He accepted for His head the spikenard whose fragrance filled the room, but He spent whole nights in prayer upon the mountain side. Everything human was dear to Him, but everything human was holy. He moved with unfettered step through life, because He ever walked in the paths of righteousness.

(2) Again, His character was as strong as it was tender. There are men who are tender, and our hearts go out to them because they are so full of pity and of sympathy, so willing to forgive and so quick to help, so easily touched by emotion, and so open to enthusiasm. But we cannot rid ourselves of the idea that they are weak and sentimental, with a touch of effeminacy and softness. Theirs is a cloistered virtue; they, so we judge them sometimes, are white plaster saints. Other men, again, are openly and certainly strong, men whom one would be glad to follow in the battle of life, and whose force gives one confidence in every strait. They do not fear the face of man, and may be broken but cannot be bent. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that those soldier-like men are apt to be hard and inconsiderate, loyal to friends, but merciless to foes, impatient of weakness, iron-handed and iron-hearted, invulnerable and vindictive, heroic and savage. We turn to Jesus to find One who has escaped the almost inevitable limitations of both strength and gentleness. He was full of pity for a sinner, but had no mercy on the Pharisees. He took children in His arms, but treated an angry multitude, with stones in their hands, as if they did not exist. He comforted the woman who had lost her son, but slept through a storm that filled seamen with terror. He prayed for His enemies, but never flinched from the Cross. He felt deeply when friends turned against Him, but was not afraid of the whole world. He was the kindest man that ever lived, and the bravest; the humblest that ever spoke to a fellow creature, and the most commanding.

(3) Then how remarkable is the absolute sanity of Jesus Christ! With all His personal greatness, sublime doctrine, and vastness of outlook and purpose, He never loses sight of the facts of human nature, of the truth of things, of the actualities and possibilities of our life. His loftiest requirements are yet manifestly reasonable and practical. History sufficiently reveals the extreme evil of adopting impossible ideals. What is too bright and good is not good enough; what overleaps itself falls on the other side; what is over-ripe is rotten. Whilst straining after ethical originality and refinement philosophers and saints have again and again fallen into eccentricity, illusion, and immorality. The New Testament gives no sanction to these aberrations. Men who have more respect for science than for Scripture listen deferentially to Darwin when he affirms that 'Natural selection never improves an animal beyond its needs'; so they might defer to our Lord, who unfailingly remembers our situation, never enjoining a theoretical perfection incompatible with actual life, which therefore would not be a perfection at all. Revelation exalts character to heavenly places in Christ Jesus; but it never fails to draw the line at the delicate point where the sublime passes into the impossible or the grotesque.

2. In the history of the past, among a multitude two men stand out, the repetition, according to their measure, of Christ, and the illustration of His perfection. Both were missionaries of the Cross.

The first was St. Paul, who was to his converts as a father and mother, and whose love ran over in his letters, the tenderest hearted of men after his Lord, but who not only endured every kind of martyrdom, but

welcomed it with joy for Christ and the gospel's sake, the most unflinching of men after his Master.

The second was St. Francis, whom Renan called 'the finest Christian since Christ,' who was on such intimate terms with the wild animals that they came to his side, and who could not pass a lamb in the midst of goats without thinking of Christ in the midst of sinners, a man of the most delicate emotions; but he dared to go on a mission to convert the Soldan, and was ready to walk through flames of fire, if that could help the Soldan to believe in Christ.

In fiction the Christian type is illustrated by Sir Galahad, whose strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure; and by Thackeray's masterpiece, Colonel Newcome, so gallant and enduring, so gentle and so humble. It is only the Spirit of Christ that has presented to the world this kind of man, who believes in the world to come yet is ready to lay down his life for the world of living men; who loves all knowledge yet counts the knowledge of God best; who pities every man yet fears no man. This is the character of the perfect knight; this is the perfection of manhood in Christ Jesus.

Harmony.

Eph. iv. 13.—'A fullgrown man.'

1. Intellectually, emotionally, and practically the world is very much alive now. But these three departments of activity are not in harmony. Men still seem as though built in compartments; the ancient partition walls are still standing. In Jesus Christ alone can they be broken down.

(1) A great wave of *intellectual life* has passed over this generation. The last fifty years have been years of astonishing progress in every department of thought. Science has been born anew; the great principle of Evolution has been set on a firm footing, and has gradually annexed one province after another, till nearly all, even of our theologians, think on evolutionary lines; and the standard of clear knowledge has been pushed 'many a furlong further into chaos.' But the leading intellects of the present day can scarcely be called religious. They are not nearly so irreligious, in either thought or life, as many theological *doctrinaires* imagine; but it is only too clear that the school that is for the moment dominant is mainly agnostic, if not materialistic, in its temper. The man of intellect is sharply walled off from the man of piety, for the time.

(2) In another direction the *practical* man has been hard at work. Inventions, discoveries, new applications of machinery, sanitation, the organization of trade and of commerce, the struggle for success, for wages, for profits, for place, for power, are fairly revolutionizing the conditions of human life. The astonishing extension of man's sovereignty over the forces of Nature has helped to make life smoother and easier for all; at least, it would have had that result were it not for the fierce spirit of competition, which has turned these physical conquests into social thraldoms, and made the struggle for existence more pitiless than ever. As a result of this grind and absorption in the mere externalities of life we find that the workers of the world are sadly lacking both in culture and in spirituality. Our political leaders, many of them; the leaders of the working classes, most of them; the kings of commerce, and invention, and discovery, at least some of them, are far from being thoughtful and well-informed outside their own narrow lines of action. Their horizon is cramped and narrow, and their spirit tends consequently to be unsympathetic and exclusive. Nor are they always men of true piety and devotion. Their whole energy is thrown into their one speciality; and so they lack scope, and loftiness, and breadth of vision and character.

(3) In yet another direction we must allow that this age is a specially *religious* age. In spite of the common impression that the churches and chapels are emptying compared with what they were a generation or two ago, we are probably as faithful to public worship as any previous generation of men. Certainly religion has never had such a hold on the

thought of the world. Its sources are being examined as never before; its enemies are more active and uncompromising—which is a proof of its vitality; its friends are more earnest and whole-hearted than ever; its literature is being enriched beyond measure or precedent; its speculative and practical bearings are more and more eagerly discussed; and the impossibility of man 'developing out of the religious stage' is being proved up to the hilt, though the death-knell of religion has been so often sounded. The churches are supremely active in evangelistic and missionary effort; they are awaking to the need of applying religion to the social problems of the age; and they are drawing closer in the bonds of Christian charity and brotherhood.

2. Here, then, is an age extraordinary for its intellectual, practical, and spiritual vitality. Surely we are living in times when there is a noble opportunity for the development of a large, ample, all-sided Christian character! That is certainly true; but the fact remains that the intellectual man is often not religious, and far from being practical; the practical man is often far from being as pious or thoughtful as he ought to be; the pious man is often neither intellectual nor practical. Even in the religious world we have these three types of men, and the lines of separation, often of antipathy, between them are, as already hinted, sharp and rigid. It is hard to get the intellectual Christian to take his place in the prayer-meeting or the Sunday-school; it is hard to get the pious Christian to listen sympathetically to a sermon that taxes his intelligence and deals with the deeper principles of religion; while the practical Christian looks right and left at these two extreme brothers of his, and cries, 'A plague on both your houses,' and goes his own way without remembering that he, too, is just as lacking in what makes the full-grown man.

3. Now the aim of the gospel is to develop a type of manhood which is just the union of these fractional kinds. In the New Jerusalem the length and the breadth and the height were equal; that is, in the new, complete man in Christ Jesus, there is a proportion and harmony of nature in which one faculty balances another, and each contributes equally to the fullness and beauty of the whole. We have been satisfied with being mere brains to think, or mere hearts to feel and worship, or mere hands to do the will of God. Faith, and thought, and works have been divorced; and so we have a Higher Criticism that has often been lacking in reverence, an Evangelism much of which is an outrage on honest thinking, a philanthropy that is short-sighted and sentimental. We look for the time when

> Mind and heart according well
> Shall make one music as before;

when criticism shall be full of faith, and faith free from cowardice, and both quick of hand and foot to do good.[1]

Christian Manhood.

Eph. iv. 13.—'Till we attain unto . . . a full-grown man.'

'A FULLGROWN MAN'—These are the words which the Apostle Paul uses in this letter to express rich, mature, fully-developed Christian manhood. According to Paul's conception the work of apostles, teachers, prophets, evangelists, and pastors had this one supreme aim, the cultivation of perfect Christian manhood. Further, he is not slow to emphasize the truth that the work of Jesus Christ is for the same end. The knowledge of the Son of God, he writes, is the means whereby we are to come unto 'a fullgrown man.' In this way he brings home to us the sovereign importance, in the sight of God, of what we *are*. The unreserved bestowal of God's redeeming and restoring grace, of which the death of Christ is the eternal token, has for its object the building up of the Christian character. Henceforth all things are for our sakes; and we may never forget that behind every holy Christian life there lies the awful fact of Divine sacrifice. To make *men*—real,

[1] E. Griffith-Jones, *Types of Christian Life*, 13ff.

true, perfect men—it behoved Christ to die, that by the knowledge of the Son of God we might come unto a fullgrown man.

Having thus indicated the ideal character, the Apostle goes on to fill in the detail of the portrait, and to point out certain tests which, if we apply them to our own lives, will reveal to us our deficiency of growth.

1. One of the effects which Paul mentions of this fullness of growth is that we shall not be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. When we reach adolescence, when manhood is maturing or matured, we must be weak and unintelligent indeed if we have not arrived at certain truths of experience which are settled beyond the possibility of question. When we speak enthusiastically about 'freedom of thought,' and 'keeping an open mind,' we ought to remember that our aim is to find truth; and truth once found, we are not free to think anything but the truth. Henceforth our mind is not open on this particular subject, but it is, as we say, made up.

¶ While I was busy about my book, Hope made known to me Palmer's work on the Church, which had just appeared. I read it with great care and interest. It took hold upon me; and gave me at once the clear, definite, and strong conception of the Church which, through all the storm and strain of a most critical period, has proved for me entirely adequate to every emergency, and saved me from all vacillation.[1]

2. The Apostle next proceeds to portray the fullgrown Christian man from the point of view of conduct. He does not even intend to exhaust the description, but he gives us plenty to think about. The picture is essentially manly. There is an ethic as well as a theology that is characteristically Pauline. And here it is. The fullgrown man will 'put away lying,' and 'speak the truth.' To lie is so mean a thing that the man must be only a poor, stunted, half-developed creature who would do it. No man with conscience fullgrown could ever lie; unless indeed he were so unfortunate as to have retained his conscience and lost his will. In either case he is not perfectly *sane,* in the true sense of that word. He is not sound, not healthful. 'If it be well weighed,' says Lord Bacon, 'to say that a man lieth is as much as to say that he is brave towards God, and a coward towards man.' This is the simple truth; and God is not deceived by the bravado. Honesty is one of the first elements of sanity.

¶ Craft is the remainder of the animal life that inheres in man, for weakness in the presence of strength is obliged to resort to craft, to dig under, to go side-ways. Concealment belongs to weakness in the presence of despotic strength. Slavery always produces lying subjects, and in the struggle for life among men the weak seek to make up their deficiencies of strength by craft.[1]

3. The next detail of character is a less obvious one. The fullgrown man will 'be angry and sin not.' That is to say, he will cultivate a wholesome moral indignation against wrong of every sort. The Apostle has evidently a poor opinion of the person who can apologize for every devilry, and who does not 'abhor that which is evil.' President Garfield was described as 'a man who would look the devil in the face and tell him he is a devil'; and we cannot forget that nothing more terrible is contained in all literature than some of the outpourings of our Saviour's Divine wrath against wicked men who were pursuing the most evil purposes.

There is a soft and characterless amiability which under no circumstances can be impelled to do a disagreeable duty, or to pronounce a plain and honest condemnation of iniquity. But true Christian speech cannot be all honey; and passionate hatred of vice is as much a part of Christian manhood as passionate love of virtue.

¶ Mr. C. F. G. Masterman's book on Maurice, charming as it is with its wealth of apt quotations and brilliancy of style, is only marred by this failure to understand Maurice's consuming passion for truth: it is a serious

[1] *Life of Gladstone,* i. 162.

[1] Henry Ward Beecher, *Lectures and Orations,* 76.

flaw in an interpretation otherwise sympathetic and adequate. While yielding to Maurice his right to be called a prophet, he does not realize that a prophet who speaks smooth things is an incredible anomaly. In proportion to the authenticity of his inspiration will be the vigour of his protest against error: it is his business to expose and pillory evil, to explore its roots in his own soul, learning meekness in the process, to wage war upon it there without truce or compromise, and then to confront it in others with the severity which has first been exercised against it in himself. In these days, when God's justice has been obscured by His mercy, when Jesus has become a type of gentleness, when charity is confused with amiability, it is the prophet's function to recall to us the 'wrath of the Lamb,' to remind us that sentimentality is the subtlest enemy of love, to restore to us our knowledge of the eternal hideousness of sin. Maurice in the agony of his own spiritual experience had fastened upon certain fundamental principles which he believed to be universal and divine: by them he judged his own life and the society around him: by them he tested the words and actions of his contemporaries. He may have been wrong; in one or two minor matters his judgment was palpably biassed by the circumstances of his age. But to criticise him because he was as severe to sin in others as he was to it in himself, because he possessed and used a power of righteous indignation towards dominant and fashionable error, is to deny his claim to the prophet's office, and to be blind to the earnestness and depth of his thought.[1]

¶ It is a mere truism that a man who neither feels nor expresses indignation at moral wrong is himself immoral.[2]

4. Another characteristic of Christian manhood is brought out by the Apostle's exhortation to his converts not to steal, but to labour with their hands. Even at that period of the world's history there were certain false and foolish ideas prevalent as to the dishonour of certain forms of manual work. Curiously enough, the occupation of a soldier was esteemed eminently honourable, while the men who made the sword or the spear without which the soldier had not been equipped were regarded with contempt. These were the men to whom the soldier owed his very existence, just as many of us to-day owe our comforts and necessaries to men and women who work for us with their hands, and whom we are sometimes tempted to despise. Now, snobbishness of this kind is clearly impossible to a fullgrown man. It is utterly alien to the spirit of a God who knows no distinction of persons. And it is the result of ignorance, and failure to apprehend the true significance of work.

¶ The discredit which in the past has been attached to manual work has historical causes which sufficiently explain it. Slavery put all work under a ban of degradation, and it was natural in view of the conditions of ancient Greece that even Aristotle should extend his contempt to the freed man who lived by the work of his own hands. Toil marked and distorted the body; its daily pay was the measure of its abasement; exhausting effort and absorption in the details of mechanical construction were held to degrade man's spirit as well as his body.

Christianity gave no countenance to this conception of manual labour. The Jews had held it to be honourable, insisting that all those who claimed to be their teachers should be able, if necessity arose, to earn their bread by their own handicraft. But those who followed the Carpenter of Nazareth and the fishermen of Galilee found a new motive in work which made it a sacred ministry to God and their fellow-man, and an appointed means of grace for their own moral development. 'Men do work, but work makes men.' The artisan is not simply engaged in labour, or the mechanic in his handicraft; they are shaping their own characters. The bootmaker is not merely making a pair of shoes; he is making his own soul. The builder is not merely erecting a house; he is raising a temple in which he with those who make their home

[1] C. E. Raven, *Christian Socialism, 1848-1854*, p. 83f.
[2] B. Whiteford, in *The Expositor*, 6th ser., i. 197.

in it may worship the Lord of all. Work honestly done is man's co-operation with the Divine Worker.[1]

5. And then, after a warning against corrupt communications—that cheap irreverence and easy assumption of impiety which passes for manliness in certain quarters still—Paul dwells on the tenderness and gentleness and lovingness of true manhood. The full-grown man has a large heart. He is not little enough to be spiteful or mean. He has no false ideal, such as those entertain who count it a proof of weakness to show their affection or betray that they have a human side. And if he is tempted to be unforgiving to someone who has wronged him, he remembers that God for Christ's sake has forgiven him. That is sure to unloose the congealed and frozen spring of his charity, and his warm humanity will flow freely forth again.[2]

¶ Michael Collins, Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Free State army was killed in an ambush by the rebels in County Cork.

The battle was nearly over, the Irregulars were on the point of retreating, defeated in spite of their overwhelming numbers, better position, and every other advantage. The firing had become much less intense when suddenly the commander-in-chief collapsed and fell, struck in the head by a bullet.

From the very first it was obvious that there was no hope, but Michael Collins, although mortally wounded, still fired from the ground, encouraging his men by his unflinching bravery. His last words as he lay dying on the roadside, and knowing he had only a minute or two to live, revealed the nobility of his character. 'Forgive them,' he said, as he breathed his last.[3]

Grown Up.

Eph. iv. 14.—'No longer children.'

Into the life of every youth there comes an hour when there awakens in him the consciousness that he is no longer a child. When he realizes his own separate personality, when he begins to think, to judge, to act for himself, and when, because he has the ability, he has also the right to be self-controlled, in that hour he becomes a young man. In that hour we might liken him to that young prince of whom we read in English history who was caught in the act of putting on his father's crown, only with this difference, that the young man is lifting to his brow the crown that belongs to none other, but is the God-given crown of his manhood.

Consider some of the obligations that devolve upon you in view of the fact that you are no longer children.

The fact that you are no longer children involves your personal responsibility. As long as you were children others were responsible for you. But now that you are 'no longer children,' all that responsibility has shifted from their shoulders and comes upon yours. In the eyes of the law, and in the eyes of society, and in the eyes of God, you have paid this price for your young manhood—you are responsible beings. Consider the extent of the responsibility that thus devolves upon you.

(1) You are responsible for your bodies, to take such physical exercises and such recreative amusements — the whole question of amusements hangs upon that adjective—to take such recreative amusements as will develop your body and keep it in health and strength. You are responsible not to injure your body by carelessness, by dissipation, by secret sin. Dark and damning is the guilt of the young man who tampers with the foundation of his life. He who sins against his body sins against his soul, against his children yet unborn, against all who shall ever be dependent upon him, against society, against his country, against his God.

¶ The body powerfully reacts upon the soul. This is what the Saviour meant when He said: 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; thy hand, cut it off.' This is why we are urged to regard our bodies as temples of the Holy

[1] *Life's True Values*, Selected Essays from 'The Times,' i. 64.
[2] C. S. Horne, *The Life That is Easy*, 19ff.
[3] *The Daily Mail*, August 24th, 1922.

Ghost. In some old cathedral where the sunshine softly pours through the stained glass windows, and the deep-toned organ sends its mellow notes out into transept and nave, and golden cups and jewelled crosses shine and sparkle in the candle-light, and the holy incense floats in fragrant clouds from swinging censers, the rapt worshipper drops reverently upon his knee and lifts his face in adoring worship to the divinity that fills the place with holiness and the heart with awe. But worthier of adoration is another temple which is nearer to his faith; and more reverent should be his regard for that sanctuary not made with hands, whose architect is God, and whose indwelling divinity, none other than the Spirit of God. One may desecrate the great cathedral and escape, but whoever defames the temple of the Holy Ghost needs no God to destroy him, for he has destroyed himself.

It is impossible to take sin into the body and evade the penalty. The memory of sin may depart, but the damage will remain. We may not be conscious of the impression, but an unseen Nemesis will execute the sentence. More sensitive than the delicate plate of the photographer is the fleshly tablet which the great Artist has placed in the camera of the human body. Dr. Hamilton wrote of unconscious mental modifications. May there not also be unconscious physical impressions which affect character and influence destiny?

It is popularly believed to be a comparatively harmless thing for a young man to 'sow wild oats.' It gives him an experience of the world. It is a salutary revelation of sin. It is only the frolic of the colt and the sportive tendency of the lamb. It is natural. In the long run it will help rather than hurt.

There never was a worse mistake. What is the youth doing but wearing channels of vice and iniquity into his body? He may reform, but the scars abide.[1]

(2) You are responsible for your mental and moral culture, for the development of your faculties—of observation, of reason, of memory, for the wise use and the strong growth of all your powers. You live in an age when men think, when men read—and you must read, and read to purpose if you are to hold your place. Do not fritter your time away with reading utter rubbish. Take a book that is hard to read, acquaint yourselves with the great writers, be familiar with the leading thinkers in every department of science and of art. You are responsible for the culture of the mind that is given you.

Writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul gives this good advice: 'In understanding be men.' You are all familiar with Francis Bacon's well-known saying, 'Reading maketh a full man, conversation a ready man, and writing an exact man'; and St. Paul's advice to young Timothy covered very much the same ground when he said: 'Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to teaching' (Revised Version); for the last of these would no doubt imply the use of the pen.

¶ The vast number of books we have impresses on us the necessity of a wise selection of what we read. One book may determine what a man shall be to all eternity. Benjamin Franklin said that a single reading of Cotton Mather's *Essay to Do Good,* shaped his entire life. One page of a good book may save a soul. One paragraph of a bad book may ruin a soul. John Angell James, one of the best men England has ever produced, stood in his pulpit in his old age and said that he had never gotten over the evil effects of having for fifteen minutes once read a bad book.[1]

(3) You are responsible for your influence, especially for your influence upon those of your own age who know you and love you and trust you and are ready to follow your example.

¶ The greatest influence is that of personality, so the most important thing in life is just what we are. . . . Near Edinburgh there is on the tomb of a young girl an epitaph, put there by her schoolfellows, that any of us might covet for our own: 'When she was with us, it was easier to be good.' Dr. A. R. Wallace tells us that if a cube of lead is placed on a cube of gold and left there at ordinary

[1] J. I. Vance, *Royal Manhood,* 75.

[1] *Watchman Examiner,* 22nd Nov. 1924.

temperature for a month, without other pressure than its own weight, at the end of that time minute particles of gold will be found to have so permeated the lead that they can be detected in any part of it. Such is influence.[1]

(4) You are responsible for your soul. You have a soul. You are a soul. Your thinking personality—for that you are responsible. You cannot ignore the fact that you come to a world where men have fallen, but where men have been redeemed. The true God, in whom you live and move and have your being, has sent His Son into the world to set you an example, that you should follow in His steps. He has died for your sake, but He has risen and ascended to the right hand of God to receive gifts for men, gifts for you; and *you* are responsible in regard of the gospel of Jesus Christ, whether you will receive Him or whether you will refuse Him; whether you will become a son of the living God, or choose to go an orphan through the world.

¶ One night in his second year at the London Hospital, Wilfred Grenfell was walking through the grey streets of Shadwell on his way back from a visit to an out-patient when he heard singing and turned aside into a tent. A man stood up to pray and was making a long dull prayer. Grenfell felt for his hat, and was just leaving when the leader on the platform stood up and interrupted the man, humorously saying, 'While our brother finishes his prayer, let us sing a hymn!' It was D. L. Moody, who in those days was known everywhere as one of the most wonderful religious speakers in the world. The humour and the firmness of the man appealed to Grenfell, and he stayed on to hear more. As he listened to Moody's speech he made up his mind that he would either throw up pretending to be a Christian at all or—as he put it—'do as Christ would in my place as a doctor.' He went a few days later to hear two famous Cambridge 'blues,' J. E. and C. T. Studd. Then and there he made up his mind.[2]

[1] W. Y. Fullerton, *Life's Dusty Way*, 51.
[2] B. Mathews, *Wilfred Grenfell*, 36.

Weathercocks.

(For Children).

Eph. iv. 14.—'Carried about with every wind.'

Our text to-day is one very high up in the world. It is something that is not mentioned in the Bible, yet five words from the fourteenth verse of the fourth chapter of Ephesians describe it exactly. Here are the words —'Carried about with every wind.' Have you guessed the text? Yes, it is a 'weathercock,' as we call it in Scotland, or a 'vane,' as they often name it in England.

Weathercocks, as you know, are not always in the form of a cock, although that is said to be the original pattern. Sometimes the piece of metal which shows the direction of the wind is shaped like a dragon or a fish or a pig; sometimes it is made like an arrow or a banner. On a ship the vane is usually a small streamer flown at the mast-head; and that is as it should be, for the old English word 'vane' just meant a 'flag' or 'banner.'

Now the sermon to-day is not only *about* weathercocks. It is also *to* weathercocks. I want to speak to all the little weathercocks who are sitting in the pews. You see, there are plenty of weathercocks inside the church, although there is only one outside on the top of the steeple.

A weathercock is a most excellent thing on the top of a steeple or a flag-staff, but it is not at all a nice thing inside a house. There it is a regular nuisance, always asking advice and never taking it, always saying, 'Shall I do this?' or, 'Shall I do that?' 'What do *you* think?' etc., etc. Poor little weathercocks! They have no minds of their own. They are facing one way one minute and whirling round the opposite way the next. They are never settled themselves, and they are always unsettling other folk and making them uncomfortable. So I want to talk to the weathercocks this morning and I want to give them three pieces of advice.

1. *Don't be a weathercock in small things.* —I wonder how many of you do something like this? You set out on Saturday

to spend a shilling which someone gave you, say, on Tuesday. You have had four days to decide what you will spend it on, but you can't quite make up your mind, so you come to the conclusion that you will settle in the shop. After looking at all the toys in the window, from left to right and from right to left again, you go into the shop and ask the girl behind the counter to show you something at a shilling. She brings out toy after toy, and the more she brings out the more difficult you find it to fix. The soldiers are fine!—But the motor-boat is A1!—And the model aeroplane is not to be sniffed at!—And so on it goes for the best part of an hour, till you are cross and tired and so is the poor shop-girl.

Once upon a time there was a little maid exactly like that. She was always chopping and changing and worrying herself and others. She became so undecided that an old lady whom she was visiting took her aside and said, 'My dear, I'm sorry to see you can never make up your mind. Remember this. It is better to decide wrongly than never to decide at all.' That sounded strange advice; but the old lady was right. The little girl tried the plan and it soon cured her of her indecision in trifles.

So the next time you can't make up your mind about a trifle say to yourself, 'It's better to decide wrongly than never to decide at all.' And choose then and there.

2. *Don't be a weathercock in big things.*—For instance, don't be undecided as to what you are going to do when you grow up. When you were very tiny I expect most of you boys wanted to be an engine-driver, or a motor-man, or a blacksmith, or a plumber. In the half-dozen years from six to twelve you chose about a dozen and a half different professions. Well, that is very interesting; but when you come to the age of twelve or fourteen it is time to make up your mind in earnest and stick to it. The boy who is first in a warehouse, and then in a bank, and then thinks he'll study medicine, and after a year of that guesses rubber-planting is the job for him and goes off to the tropics—that boy *may* be a success; but the chances are ten to one that he'll be a failure and a rolling stone all his days.

Boys and girls, think well before deciding on your future career, but, having decided, stick to your decision and make your life what it ought to be—a success.

3. *Don't be a weathercock in the biggest thing of all.*—What do I mean by that? Just this: don't be undecided about following Christ. Don't be half-persuaded that it would be a fine thing to be a Christian, and then hold back from becoming one. Don't say to yourself one day, 'I'm going to follow Christ,' and the next, 'It'll be time enough to do it when I grow up.' Don't tell yourself one minute, 'Christ is the only Master worth serving,' and the next be whispering to your heart, 'What if serving Him means giving up all my fun and turning pious?'

If the last idea is the one that is keeping you from deciding, then all I can say is that you never made a greater mistake. Why! You only begin truly to enjoy yourself when you decide to follow Christ. Following Him does not mean pulling a long face and looking 'holy.' It means being jollier than before because you have a contented sort of feeling at your heart, and everything seems the same, only better. Don't tell me you need to give up anything except—except—the love of evil. Throw that away and put the love of Christ in its place. That's all.

Then why be a weathercock about what grown-up people call 'the great decision'? The very name 'great decision' sounds terrifying; but there is nothing to be terrified about. It may be great, but it is easy as easy, and the younger you are the easier it is.

So, determine to-day, boys and girls, that about this at least you will be no weathercock. Make up your mind on the spot that you are going to enlist on the side of Christ, that you are going to scorn meanness, shun evil, and fight like a knight of old for God and the Right.[1]

[1] *The Children's Great Texts of the Bible*, vi. 137.

The Highest Life.

Eph. iv. 14, 15.—'That we . . . may grow up in all things into him, which is the head, even Christ.'

HUMAN life lived at its highest levels, and in its noblest quality, is a religious life. The finest type of man is not the warrior, or the philosopher, or the scientist, or the artist, or the statesman, but the saint. Our deepest homage is given not to the man who knows most of Nature, or history, or politics, or economics, but to the man who lives nearest to God, and knows most about Him, because he lives nearest to Him. I honour the man who can let me into fresh secrets of the natural world, who can harness a new force to the service of his kind; I honour still more the man who has creative power over the world of ideas, and leads me captive into the fairy-lands of poesy and art; but if I know of one who can take me up the Mount of Vision and show God to me, cleansing my eyes of their blindness and unstopping my ears of their heaviness, then I will sell all I have and set out to-morrow on my journey to the ends of the earth, that I may find him and sit at his feet. Yes; to know God, this is life—life at its best; life in its highest quality and power; this is the life eternal for which my soul thirsts and pants, and without which it must in the end die the second death. And if I can discover the secret of finding God for myself and of enjoying Him in my own right; if by severest discipline and earnest striving and persistent believing prayer I can do *this*, then is it not worth my while? There are many quests in life worth striving for; but this is surely the highest and holiest quest of all!

How is this quest to be followed? In obedience to three laws. For every faculty and power of our nature grows and develops according to three laws, each of which must be fulfilled. These laws are Food, Exercise, and Rest.

1. *Food.*—How are we to feed our higher nature? What heavenly manna is there for the spirit? Light for the eye, music for the ear, but what for the soul?

(1) First of all, for the man who has a nature in tune with the Infinite even the world of matter contains an apocalypse and a revelation. The scientist tells us that the gorgeous hues of sunset can all be mechanically accounted for as a series of vibrations in the ether. None the less to the spiritually susceptible God has in such a sight lifted the veil for a moment from the glories of His own being, and we can gaze on His uncreated splendour itself.

Take a sunset, a series of ethereal vibrations, merely mechanical in origin, and as such other than they seem, whose total effect is to create in us an optical illusion, making the sun, and not the earth, appear to move. Yet as men watch its appearance, thoughts and feelings arise in their hearts that move their inmost being in unnumbered ways. Youth is fired to high ideals; age consoled with peaceful hopes; saints, as they pray, see heaven opened; sinners feel conscience strangely stirred; mourners are comforted; weary ones rested; lovers united; worldlings purified and softened as they gaze. In a short half-hour all is over: the mechanical process has come to an end: the gold has melted into grey. But countless souls meanwhile have been soothed, and solaced, and uplifted by that evening benediction from the far-off sky; and the course of human life to-day is modified by the setting of yesterday's sun.

¶ The lights and gleams of sunset, its golden inlets and cloud-ripples, the dusky veil it weaves about the world, is for my own spirit the solemnity which effects for me what I believe that the mass effects for a devoted Catholic—the unfolding in hints and symbols of the mysteries of God. An unbeliever may look on at a mass and see nothing but the vesture and the rite, a drama of woven paces and waving hands, when a believer may become aware of the very presence of the divine. And the sunset has for me that same unveiling of the beauty of God; it illumines and transfigures life; it shows me visibly and sacredly that beauty pure and stainless runs

from end to end of the universe, and calls upon me to adore it, to prostrate myself before its divine essence. The fact that another may see it carelessly and indifferently makes no difference. It only means that not thus does he perceive God. But, for myself, I know no experience more wholly and deeply religious than when I pass in solitude among deep stream-fed valleys, or over the wide fenland, or through the familiar hamlet, and see the dying day flame and smoulder far down in the west among cloudy pavilions or in tranquil spaces of clear sky. Then the well-known land whose homely, day-long energies I know seems to gather itself together into a far and silent adoration, to commit itself trustfully and quietly to God, to receive His endless benediction, and in that moment to become itself eternal in a soft harmony of voiceless praise and passionate desire.[1]

If the sunsets are so fit,
These must be the Infinite
In another rising elsewhere and beyond the bounds of sleep;
I may gather from a part
What the whole enjoys at heart,
With the greatness of its compass and the ocean of its sweep;
I shall measure it at length
And be mingled with that strength,
If I wait but till the morrow and a loyal vigil keep;
For I then shall waken up
With the bird and buttercup,
When I realise myself as God within the shoreless Deep.[2]

(2) But man is more than Nature, and so he reveals more of God than Nature can do. And we must feed on the revelation of God in conscience, which is within us, and in history, which is behind us, and in other souls that are around us. True, man, being free, can hide God, as well as reveal Him, and that is the sad aspect of our humanity; but the very vices and crimes and sins of man reveal God, the Holy One, by contrast, as darkness makes light more visible. But the help which the great and the good men and women of this poor earth can give us in our search for God is beyond words. How near He comes to us in every true word fitly spoken, in every pure thought adequately expressed, in every noble deed simply and lovingly wrought! This is the miracle of our fellowship with one another—that one man's vision by sympathy can become another's, that his strength can multiply itself through an army of weaklings, that his inspiration can set a nation incandescent with courage and hope. Thank God for those who dwell on the heights, and whose voices reach those who live in the valleys of life!

¶ To associate Henry Drummond only with meetings and addresses would be to misrepresent him. Had he ever been carried away with the size and success of these, had he ever been tempted to swerve from his own principle that the individual was the aim and object of religion, he must have been brought back by one element of the meetings themselves. At each of these there were handed up to the chairman a large number of requests for prayer, which in nine cases out of ten had to do with the darkness or the tragedy of some individual life. Carefully preserved among his documents are some scores of these anonymous scraps of paper, shabby, soiled, and often misspelt, each of them the confession of a fallen soul, or the sob of a broken heart, or the cry for warmth of a cold and a starving one. From vice or servitude to some besetting sin, from long doubt and vain struggle to the light, from wrecked and dreary homes, or wasted by love and fear that had battled for years over the characters of those who were dearest to them, they had crept to the meetings, and felt the strength of the faith that was present, and cried to be lifted upon it as their last chance. Drummond sought out many of these, and was sought by many more. He worked hard in the inquiry rooms; but shy men who would not stand up in a meeting, nor enter an inquiry room, waited for him by the doors as he came out, or waylaid him in

[1] A. C. Benson, *Escape*, 123.
[2] F. W. Orde Ward, *Selected Poems*, 86.

the street, or wrote asking him for an interview. He took great trouble with every one of them, as much trouble and interest as if each was a large meeting. His sympathy, his leisure from himself, his strength, won their confidence, as his personal charm on the platform had first stirred their hope, and he thus became acquainted with the secrets of hundreds of lives. Men felt he was not a voice merely, but a friend, and on his arm they were lifted up. He was always hopeful about the most hopeless, picked out some good points in the worst, and sent a man away feeling that he was trusted once more, not only by this friend, but by Christ, by God. The affection which such treatment aroused was extraordinary. I have seen numbers of letters, commonplace enough but for the intense love and gratitude which they breathe, and which sometimes approaches worship. It was such power as was possessed by some of the greatest of the mediaeval saints—and he was not twenty-four. One man said to me only the other day, 'Since Drummond died I have not been able to help praying to him.'[1]

(3) Let us feed ourselves also on the great Book in which God's clearest light shines, and where His mightiest word is written. We do not make what our fathers made of the Bible. We do not read it ourselves as they did; we do not teach it to our children; we do not live by it. Man was not made for bread alone, but for every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Those who feed on the Book, those who eat this precious roll of living truth, verily do find it 'in their mouth as honey for sweetness,' and they go on the strength of it many a forty days' journey into the wilderness.

¶ There are millions on millions of men who might struggle and pray all their lives to understand and see the beauty of the poems of Homer and Shakespeare, and all in vain. But there is not one, poor or rich, who can ask God sincerely to let him know the deepest meaning of the Bible and the words of Christ, without being answered by receiving a spirit of understanding and love. And why? Not because the Bible is less profound and beautiful, but because we are made to share the self-same spirit. He who taught comes to interpret. This may appear mysticism or fanaticism, but it is the faith of all real Christians, and attested by its effects as seen in the humblest intellects.[1]

(4) But there is a Word greater than the written word, and that is Christ the Living Word. He is the true manna from above. In Him is the glory of God revealed. 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.' And that is a true saying. Christ is the Shepherd of souls, who leads His own into green pastures, and beside still waters. If we would truly grow spiritually we must feed on the celestial food which He can and will give to those who are one with Him. For while others can only point the way, He is the Way; while others can only testify of the truth, He is the Truth; while others can only participate of His life, He is the Life. Therefore all true spiritual growth is growth Christward; all true life is the life which He imparts to the hungry and aspiring soul.

The powers of common blood and flesh
My spirit foul and grieve:
O Lord, create my spirit fresh,
Then these new health receive.

On Christ, the meat and drink divine,
I feed my thoughts and heart;
At each repast some acts are mine,
But Thine the chiefest part.

Through Thee I stronger, better grow,
Old life for new exchange;
Thy work divine by this I know—
It blends the plain and strange.[2]

2. *Exercise.*—First food, in order to grow: then exercise. Without exercise, food clogs and poisons. No lazy man can be a healthy man. Work is needful for the physical life: work and struggle, and the discipline of stren-

[1] G. A. Smith, *The Life of Henry Drummond*, 97.

[1] J. Ker, *Thoughts*, 91.
[2] T. T. Lynch.

uous effort. And if we would live spiritually and grow, we must 'exercise' ourselves 'unto godliness.' Thank God, He has provided plenty of opportunities. This world is a probation, a testing, a trial, a warfare, a quest, a race. Mysteries, for the mind to puzzle over, and solve, if it can. Temptations, for the will to meet—and master. Tasks, for the hands to grapple with and complete. And all, that the soul may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, even Christ!

Even Christ did not escape this strenuous discipline, for He knew what disappointment was, and sorrow beyond sorrow, and fierce combats with the tempter, and the bitterness of death. Thus, and not otherwise, did He too conquer; so was He made perfect—a full-grown Man, who made temptation 'crouch beneath His feet,' and stood at last 'pedestalled in triumph.' Can we drink of the cup that He drank of, and be baptized with His baptism? We are able in His strength so to do, and the promise is, that if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.

(1) There is no better educator for the mind, no nobler discipline for the soul, than that service for others which is the privilege of the people of Christ. If we would grow unto Him, we must share in His work, we must take part in His service. 'Son, go work today in my vineyard'—God says that to us not only for the sake of His vineyard, but for our own sake. Who are the elect souls of the earth? They are those that are busiest in doing good. Who are those in whom the saintly quality predominates? They are those who spend themselves wholeheartedly in His service. Who are those that have the clearest, most constant, most rewarding light on the path of life? They are those that find their meat and their drink in doing the will of their Father who is in Heaven. As we live and work for Christ, life's shadows lift; windows break open on all sides; we walk in the light of life. God whispers His dearest secrets in the ears of those who do most for Him.

(2) Then there is prayer, strenuous believing prayer—what an educator this is! He who prays, says the old Latin proverb, also works. More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Surely here, if anywhere, is the master secret of soul growth! It is the outreach of the soul Godward; it is the finite spirit standing on tiptoe, seeking to absorb and be one with the Infinite Spirit Himself. If we would develop our spiritual nature to its limits—nay, if we would lift those limits away, as Samson lifted the gates of Gaza—let us pray with earnestness, and with faith.

3. *Rest.*—Besides food and exercise there is rest. For rest, as well as food and exercise, is needful for attaining the soul's stature. But, it may be said, there is no room for rest in this world of perpetual change and struggle. Is there not? Surely it is possible in the busiest life to have moments of true passivity, during which the energies sleep that they may wake to nobler and fresher activity. And there is such a thing as having an inner secret principle of restfulness in the very heart of life's tumult and stress. Paul had such a secret, and John, and above all, Jesus. 'Joy is like restless day, but peace like quiet night.' Let us cultivate that peace. There is a perfectly quiet, silent spot, we are told, in the centre of the wildest storm, and there can be such in the life of all. Christ is the Giver of rest, the Fountain of that peace which the world cannot give, nor take away.

O Lord, how happy is the time
When in Thy love I rest!
When from my weariness I climb
Even to Thy tender breast!
The night of sorrow endeth there—
Thou art brighter than the sun;
And in Thy pardon and Thy care,
The heaven of heaven is won.

Let the world call herself my foe,
Or let the world allure—
I care not for the world, I go
To this dear friend and sure.
And when life's fiercest storms are sent,
Upon life's wildest sea,
My little bark is confident,
Because it holds by Thee.[1]

[1] Dessler, tr. by Greville Matheson.

Truth and Love.

Eph. iv. 15.—'Speaking the truth in love.'

When Paul admonished the Ephesians to speak 'the truth in love,' he used a verb which may mean a good deal more. It has been suggested that the verb should be translated 'to truth it,' 'truthing it in love,' if we are to cover all that St. Paul meant.

The phrase 'speaking truth' represents a word which means much more than speaking only. It means having to do with truth in every way—speaking the truth, dealing the truth, doing the truth, and even receiving the truth. The state which St. Paul here commends is the same as that which St. John calls walking in the truth, abiding in the truth—that truth which, he says in his Second Epistle, 'abideth in us and shall be with us for ever.' With something of this wide meaning, St. Paul bids us 'do the truth in love.'

Whether we seek or hold the truth, speak it or act it, the first condition that we must observe is that we should be living and moving within the universe of love. For without love we shall neither find nor hold nor speak nor act the truth for long. Love is the matrix of truth; and it is only in the exchanges of love that we gather that authentic experience of life which is the raw material of truth. Outside this region there is only illusion and lies. . . . Love and Truth are one and indivisible.

Pilate is supposed to have been indulging in a cynicism or a jest when he asked, 'What is truth?' And perhaps he was. He was a politician; and he wanted to be a successful politician; and it was then, as it is still, the condition of political distinction that you should not let yourself be troubled by a little thing like truth. Lord Morley, in his essay on Compromise, speaks of the politician's habit of 'making truth a subordinate department of daily politics.' And the processes of international politics are with a grim irony called 'diplomacy,' which is the Greek form of the Latin derivative 'duplicity.' The reason for this is quite simple. If A wants to gain an advantage over B, it is necessary for him to hide his intentions and his plans from B. Consequently he resorts to tactics of deceit, evasion, misinformation, anything that will put B off the scent. The extraordinary currency of the word 'camouflage' since the war shows how shot through and through with this habit is our life. And whensoever a man or a group or a nation pursues a private or particularist end, disrespect for truth becomes an article of faith. In war your chief objective is to beat the enemy; and it is a commonplace of war that you must sedulously conceal your plans and mislead the enemy. In his famous 'Soldier's Pocket-book,' the late Lord Wolsley said that the soldier who believed Sunday-school maxims like 'Honesty is the best policy' and 'Truth always wins in the end' had better sheathe his sword for ever.

Parties within the nation use the same tactics against one another as nations at war do. We do it in business, we do it in social intercourse; and so long as individuals and groups pursue particularist aims, live to grind their own axes, suppose their own interests cannot be pursued without injury to some other interests, so long will life all the way from the merest trifle of social behaviour to vast international issues involving life and death for multitudes be governed by the tactics of deceit and evasion.

We might as well bay for the moon as expect public truthfulness until men and nations realize that their real and final interests are always and everywhere identical; and that by the pursuit of particularist and self-regarding interests they are not only condemned to deceiving others, but they are swindling themselves most of all, bartering their human birthright for a mess of nationalistic or class pottage.

Now truth is the child of love; and love is an energy of integration born out of the perception that we are one body, we humans, with common and identical interests. Truth comes out of working together, bearing each

other's burdens, sharing each other's sufferings, making common cause in the great task of life, forbearing one another, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven us. For it is only in these contacts with life that we gain the authentic human experience which holds the raw material of truth. We lose the truth in conflict; we find it in love. And in the end there is only one fundamental heresy, the heresy against love; for the heresy against love is not merely the denial but the destruction of truth.

God has set us in a world upon which we act and react; He has endowed us with certain affections and affinities, certain impulses and tendencies, certain powers and faculties; and by our action and reaction upon one another and upon the world we acquire and accumulate what we call experience. And it is out of this gathered experience that we are to beat out the truth that shall make us free. You know how Euclid began his geometry by laying down a few definitions and postulates and axioms; and how out of these he constructed and solved twelve bookfuls of problems and theorems. Euclid, out of a handful of very simple propositions, managed to construct an extensive and elaborate geometrical system. And whether that system be absolutely true or not, it is true to the assumptions with which it starts. And so out of those natural endowments of mind and heart and body which are our native human inheritance we are to work out that body of truth by which life can grow from more to more in freedom and power and joy.

But something has gone awry; and after millennia of experience, we have not yet seen more than scattered fragments of the truth that liberates. William James says that truth is what works; if he meant that it is truth because it works, I think he must be wrong; but it is right that we know it to be the truth when it works. The one plain inference to be drawn from the present confusion and the misery of the world is that we have not discovered the truth that works; that life is ordered and managed on the basis of fallacies that we mistake for truth, upon doctrines that wind up in tragedy and waste and sorrow.

To go back to Euclid for a moment. One of Euclid's definitions was that parallel straight lines are lines that, if you produce them as far as possible either way, will never meet. But in one of the new geometries, we are told, it is assumed that if you do produce them far enough they will meet. Now if the new geometry is right in its idea of parallel straight lines a great deal of Euclid's geometry falls to the ground, and you have to construct a new geometry from the bottom up.

It seems to me that we have a situation of that kind in life. The kind of experience that mankind will acquire will depend entirely upon the assumption with which it starts out. If it sets out on the assumption that all men are beasts, then it will accumulate one kind of experience; if it sets out on the assumption that all men are brothers we shall naturally accumulate another kind of experience. And the truth we shall learn or suppose we learn will be different according to the experience we have gathered.

And it seems to me that the truth we think we have learned, the dogmas by which we govern our lives, the conventional doctrines of state and market-place have been derived from an experience which has grown out of the assumption that men are beasts, that they are inherently and incurably self-regarding and self-seeking, that it is their nature to grind their own axes—every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. 'Do the other man,' as David Harum said, 'as the other man would do you, *and do him fust.*'

Suppose, instead of assuming that men are beasts, we should assume that they are brothers. Supposing we realized after all that the parallel lines do meet, and, having made the great discovery, we started to live on it! Why, within a few weeks, we should find ourselves throwing the old economics into the discard; we should throw our political shibboleths into the scrap-heap; we should start acquiring a new type and quality of experience; and out of it we should evolve a brand

new body of economic doctrine, and a brand new political philosophy. . . . For the old cut-throat economics we should have the economics of brotherhood; for the politics of group-selfishness, of suspicion and resentment, we should have the politics of co-operation and reconciliation. We should find the truth that makes us free—free, above all, from fear, the ancient arch-enemy of our race.

Substitute the politics of the square deal for the politics of sharp practice; it will help the nations to pool their interests instead of trying to skin each other and pick each other's pockets and steal each other's commerce. There is enough and to spare of material good in this round earth for all the people in it; and if we had sense enough to drop this lunatic scramble and begin working together to organize the world for the good of all its people, we should build a world that would be infinitely wealthy, infinitely healthy and infinitely wise.

A world learning the truth in love! It would be easy to fall into a dithyrambic about it; but let us not deceive ourselves. . . . We are nowhere near so paradisal a consummation. The ape and the tiger die hard in us men and women; and love is sore beset. Once there came One into this world to teach it how to love, to live in love; and Him it crucified between two thieves in hatred and contempt. And perhaps some nation—a whole people—will have to be crucified for love, before mankind will see the Truth. But what a glorious destiny for any nation, to be the Christ of Nations, to suffer, to die, and to rise again in utter and imperishable glory of Love and Truth and Beauty! Will it be this nation—or that?

But it is idle so to speak. Come nearer home. Are you and I ready to take the risk of a love like His? It is foolish to ask of whole nations what you and I will not dare.[1]

[1] R. Roberts.

Growth.

Eph. iv. 15.—'May grow up in all things.'

Certain it is that as time passes, whether we will or not, we are growing, in some sense, and up to something. Neither the soul nor the body of man is ever stationary. It is said that within seven years the whole substance of a man's body changes, by the mere processes of exhaustion and nutrition. And who that watches what goes on in that more important part of man's being, the soul, can be insensible to the changes, many and profound, that surely come with the lapse of time? Neither feeling nor thought is ever stationary; growth and decay are always in progress; but the vital question is what the Apostle calls, epigrammatically, 'the old man'—is that decaying, or is it 'the new'? Is it 'the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' who is growing, or is it the old? A vital question, most assuredly, for us all, especially as life draws on towards its close, and the day approaches when the result of all such growth and change here will become fixed and unalterable.

How should we grow? What increase should we make?

1. There is first *an increase in Knowledge.* 'Speaking the truth in love,' being followers of truth, confessing the truth, dealing truly, being loyal to the truth as disclosed in Christ, alike in contemplation and in action, we grow in the vision and appreciation of Him 'in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' The knowledge of the Divine character, will, and purpose is revealed in the Lord, and it is our privilege to increase indefinitely in that highest, holiest knowledge. We smile when told of pupils 'completing their studies,' because we are conscious of the boundlessness of natural knowledge; there is no limit, no finality, in the story of the universe.

¶ Many years ago the Czar Nicholas determined to have the finest observatory in the

world, and he instructed the famous Wilhelm Struve to see that it was built, giving him practically *carte blanche* as regards expense. It was built at Pulkowa, near St. Petersburg. The buildings and equipment are magnificent. When all was finished, the Czar came to inspect it, and after being shown over the observatory, turned to the director and asked simply whether he was satisfied; to which the diplomatic astronomer replied that he was—*for the moment*. The man of science realized that whatever is done in the investigation of the heavens is only tentative, and that new and grander instruments are soon requisite to search the secrets of the ever-expanding dome. How much more is it true that in our knowledge of Christ we can be satisfied only for the moment! Each day should bring us a clearer vision, a richer appreciation, a firmer hold of the truth of the gospel. The character of God ought to shine upon us with a more golden light; the will of God, which is our sanctification, to be realized in new insight and sympathy; and the purpose of God, which is our eternal salvation, to acquire day by day fresh meaning and power.[1]

2. There is *an increase in Love*. The world covets the larger brain; Christ taught us to covet the larger heart.

(1) Love to God is the passionate admiration of supreme excellence. To love God is to love truth which knows no error, beauty free from the suspicion of fault, righteousness in which there is no darkness at all, love which can know no taint of selfishness. In this perfection we are to realize a growing delight. As life proceeds God makes all His goodness to pass before us, and our wonder and joy in God Himself should become increasingly deep and pure.

In childhood we admire picture-books, and think little of the pure thought; but growing into manhood we care less for the picture, and more for the idea, reasoning, and imagination: and so as we grow in truth and spirituality the pictured universe and life's concrete gifts are in proportion ever less and less to us, and God Himself, in His essential, eternal beauty and righteousness, more and more.

> These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,
> Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
> Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then.

Christ in His redemptive love diverts our eye from creatures, things, and mediums, to fix it upon the wondrousness of God Himself, thus filling our heart with pure love for the eternally Perfect; and it is our highest privilege to increase continually in this noblest enthusiasm.

(2) The love grows equally towards man. The Apostle in the context shows clearly enough that we do not grow alone through mystical contemplation and fellowship whilst living a solitary life, but through the action and reaction of human sympathy and helpfulness. The great Head of the Church has gifted us 'for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ'; and it is only whilst we are loyal to this calling that 'we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' We are not perfected as we stand apart from society in sublime dreaming and ecstasy, but as we mix with men, sympathize with them in their sorrows and needs, and practically minister to them. The love of our brother lets us more deeply into the love of God. We must grow in human love, patience, and helpfulness.

¶ Lord Shaftesbury is the greatest practical mystic of all time. He was essentially and instinctively a mystic. He saw Christ where nobody else discovered Him. As a lover hears his lady's name in the sigh of the wind and the song of the birds, so, having learned to love his Saviour with all his soul, Lord Shaftesbury found *Him* everywhere. Sir Launfal found Christ in the leper. Lord Shaftesbury saw Him in criminals, orphans, cripples, paupers, lunatics and chimney-

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Education of the Heart*, 75.

sweeps. He spent all his time, his fortune, and his energy on *them*, because he felt that, inasmuch as he did it unto *them*, he did it unto *Him*. Thus, I find him at dead of night in a thieves' kitchen. Look at him! He is surrounded by hundreds of the most desperate criminals in London. They listen respectfully as he urges them to abandon their lawless lives. 'But how,' one burglar wants to know, 'how are we to live if we give it up?' Lord Shaftesbury urges them to pray for guidance. 'But, my lord,' one man replies, 'prayer is very good, but prayer won't fill an empty stomach!' The objector evidently mistook Lord Shaftesbury for a mere dreamer of dreams. He did not know his man. Lord Shaftesbury took the names of those who sincerely desired to live honestly, and within a few months he had settled hundreds of them on Canadian farms or introduced them to honourable and remunerative avocations at home.[1]

3. There is *an increase in Character*. A growth out of our old imperfections. We may truly be in Christ, and yet retain serious defects of character. And just as we should grow out of old imperfections, we ought to grow also in all the elements of Christian excellence. Jesus Christ did not discover new virtues; all the moralities He taught were familiar and commonplace. What He did was to show us the old virtues touched to unearthly perfection, just as the florist does not discover a new plant, but brings a new flower out of a familiar stem which hitherto bore only a meagre blossom. And thus all the virtues were seen in Him in incomparable fullness and splendour. Into this beauty of holiness we ought ever to grow, a perfection which everybody can feel, yet which none can explain.

¶ Gibbon relates that one of the Roman emperors by a strange vicissitude of fortune was brought from prison to receive the imperial diadem; and as a smith could not at once be found, the monarch sat for some hours on the throne of the Cæsars with the fetters still on his limbs. Do not Christians sometimes remind us of this strange sight? Their soul is brought out of prison, but relics of the old degradation cleave to them still, and the royal signs and ornaments of virtue strangely mingle with half-broken fetters of evil. Out of every such relic of the sad captivity ought we to grow, and not one evil thought remain.[1]

[1] F. W. Boreham, *A Casket of Cameos*, 274.

The Head and the Body.

Eph. iv. 15, 16.—'That we may grow up in all things into him, which is the head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.'

THAT letter of Paul's which we call the Epistle to the Ephesians was addressed to a much wider circle of readers than could be found in one city. As Peter later writes to the strangers scattered throughout several districts in Asia Minor, as John later still addresses the Divine message to the principal Churches of the Roman province called Asia, so (there is good reason to think) the destination of Paul's letter was not Ephesus only, the metropolis of the region, but all the Christian communities established in the several populous centres—perhaps throughout the provinces, perhaps extending over a still wider area. In the copies used by more than one of the ancient Fathers, the words 'in Ephesus' were absent from the opening verse. They are wanting in the two oldest MSS. which time has spared to us. Plainly these copies were derived from an archetype, in which a blank had been left for the name of the Church and had never been filled in. Another still more ancient writer called this the Epistle to the Laodiceans. Clearly he fell in with a copy addressed, not to Ephesus, but to Laodicea. And if it be asked how the common title prevailed, how the Church came to receive this as an Epistle to the Ephesians, the answer is simple. From Ephesus, the most populous

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Education of the Heart*, 79.

city and the most important Church, the political and ecclesiastical metropolis of the region, the most numerous copies would be disseminated; and as some definite title was necessary, Ephesus, occupying this vantage ground, usurped the room and displaced the name of the other Churches in the heading of the Epistle.

Now in all Paul's Epistles the subject-matter is determined by the destination. This is especially the case with the letter before us. Its encyclical character explains its main theme—the Church as one, and yet manifold; one, as united in Christ, manifold, as comprising various members, various functions. Addressing these various communities, the Apostle cannot occupy himself with the refutation of individual errors, with the remedy of individual needs. Rather he seeks for some one grand comprehensive theme, which shall correspond to the comprehensive destination of the Epistle. This theme he finds in the idea of the Church as embracing all the churches, the ideal community regarded as one harmonious whole, but comprising diverse branches, diverse offices, diverse members. Starting from the phenomenon of variety, he arrives at the idea of unity. It seeks the centre of union, the principle of cohesion, in Christ the Head. They all are one body, animated by one spirit; they all acknowledge one faith, into which they have been admitted by one baptism; they all are united in the one Lord, and through Him draw near to the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.

1. Under three images especially this relation is developed.

(1) The Church is the Bride; Christ is the Bridegroom. Here a special aspect of this connection is figured. The purity of love, the singleness of devotion, the perfection of obedience, the entire oneness of interests and aims—these are the features especially brought out. 'They twain shall be one flesh.' 'This is a great mystery.' 'I speak concerning Christ and the Church.'

(2) The Church is a Temple; Christ the Chief Cornerstone. This again, though a very expressive image, is yet partial. The compactness, the coherence, are prominent in it. The succession of layers, the stratification of the edifice, is also significant. And lastly, the object of the erection, the indwelling of the Spirit, finds its proper place.

(3) But far more expressive and more full is the third and remaining image, the image of the text. Christ is the Head; the Church is the Body; each individual is a member, a limb, of the whole. This image supplies what was deficient in the last—the idea of mobility, vigorous life, diffused through the whole from one central, guiding, inspiring, vivifying power; the idea of an internal principle of growth; the idea of infinite variety of conditions, functions, needs, in the several parts; and combined with this the idea of the closest sympathy and interdependency, so that each is sensitive to the action of the other, and each necessary to the well-being of the whole.

2. This image of the Head and the Body must have had a speaking significance to the Apostle's contemporaries. To ourselves it presents itself with even greater vividness and force in the light of later discoveries. The two main points in this relation are summed up in the two prepositions used to describe it in the text—'into him' and 'from him.' There is a concentrative energy tending towards the Head; and there is a diffusive energy spreading from the Head. The head, the brain, is the initiative centre of our actions; and it is also the receptive centre of our sensations. From it all the various motions of the body are originated; and to it the manifold impressions of the senses are communicated. By two sets of nerves, as by two sets of telegraphic wires, this twofold communication with the head as the central office, the seat of government in the human frame, is maintained. By the one set the brain, the thinking, planning, originating power, transmits its orders to the furthest member; the order is received; the muscle contracts; the joint is moved; and the hand holds, or the foot walks. By the other set the reverse process is carried on; the grasp

which presses the hand, the rays which strike the eye, the pulsations which beat on the ear—all these are transmitted to the centre, and the corresponding sensation is thereby and there produced. Such also is the relation of Christ to the Church. His control guiding the various members, and His sympathy feeling with the various members—these are the functions which this image brings out clearly.

(1) There is *the controlling power*. The direction, the influence, the illuminating, guiding energy of the Eternal Word of God, is infinitely varied and extends throughout mankind. But there is a more definite, concentrated form of this control which the same Word exerts as the Incarnate Christ, not as the Head only of Universal Nature, but as the Head of the Church specially. His teaching, His example, His Incarnation and Passion are the manifestation of the Father's love, His Resurrection is the manifestation of the Father's power—these are the outward agency; the Spirit which the Father sends in His name—this is the invisible medium through which He controls and enlightens and directs His Church. Thus He communicates the Almighty Will to us. Not veiling but revealing the Father, not interposing between man and God but reflecting God to man, He acts upon the Church. And it is just according as we, the individual members of His Body, preserve our communication with Him; according as (in the language of the parallel passage in the Epistle to the Colossians) we 'hold fast the Head'—that is, according as our life is conformed to His life, our spirit interpenetrated with His Spirit, our being incorporated in His Being—that His orders are duly received, prompt, healthy, vigorous action ensues, and the will of the Father is done. The joint may be dislocated by worldly indulgence and distraction; or the limb may be paralysed by spiritual carelessness. If so, there will be no response, or no adequate response, to the message transmitted. But if the communication is intact, then, by a necessary spiritual law, action must follow, obedience must be complete.

(2) But, secondly, *the sympathetic office of Christ* is suggested by the image. As the natural body, so also the spiritual body has its system of nerves, which communicate the sensations of its lowest, most distant, members to the Head. This entire sympathy of Christ is no after-thought of the Apostle's, no idle fancy of an overwrought imagination, or outgrowth of unrestrained metaphor. The 'crucifying of the Son of God afresh' has its parallel in Christ's own declarations. No language of Paul or of the Epistle to the Hebrews can express this truth more strongly than His own words—recorded (be it observed) not in this instance by John, but by the other Evangelists—'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.' 'Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me.' With the humblest member of His body He suffers: with the humblest member also He rejoices.[1]

Said I, if one might see His face
Earth were not then so lone a place,
And every day would wear a grace.

In dreams that night I heard His voice;
Then greatly did my heart rejoice;
For now should I behold my choice.

Not so—instead He spoke to me,
'No blessèd vision shalt thou see;
Not thus will Christ appear to thee.'

And lo! before me seemed to pass
Faces of friends, as in a glass;
No form divine of Him, alas!

But every neighbour I had known
Of sick and poor, of sad and lone,
All the familiar forms of home.

'These are my kinsfolk, thou shalt see
My face in their humanity,
And serving them, thou servest Me.'[2]

[1] J. B. Lightfoot, *Cambridge Sermons*, 173ff.
[2] Nettie Rooker, *The Streets of Nazareth*, 38.

Conversion and After.

Eph. iv. 17.—'This I say therefore.'

THE word 'therefore' marks the transition in this Epistle from theology to ethics. Two tones may be distinguished among Christian people on the relation between doctrine and conduct. There are those who never weary of saying: 'Make the tree good and the fruit will be good. The one thing to be desired and thought of is the conversion, the regeneration, of the individual. Then, and then only, will you secure the fruits of righteousness which you desire.' And, on the other hand, it is said: 'For many, many generations that doctrine has been taught with great power and with very considerable results, but plainly it does not cover the whole case. Let us lay it aside for a while. Let us concentrate ourselves upon the illustration and enforcement of character. Let us expound the details of human duty. Let us take up into the pulpit with us the problems of the world's work-a-day life, and examine them and report upon them, and draw out the lessons concerning good and evil.' Now there is truth, and much truth, in the position of each of these.

1. In the first place, St. Paul does emphatically teach that the beginning of all true Christian character lies in conversion. That is not his favourite expression, but it is a perfectly well understood one. In this very Epistle, for example, he uses one or two very powerful terms by which to describe what he means. These Ephesians, whom he is now exhorting and instructing respecting their Christian character, he has addressed more than once as those who were 'dead in trespasses and sins,' but who have been 'quickened,' made alive; and that quickening is always, in the teaching of the Apostle, 'in' or 'with' Jesus Christ, so that at once we are brought into the presence of Christ before we are allowed to enter upon any careful study of ethics. The Apostle plainly teaches that it is of little use—of no use at all—to arrange the course of discipline, of instruction, of encouragement, of guidance of human nature, unless, in the first place, it be brought into a vital relation, a quickening relation, with Jesus Christ. And the same thought underlies a very different figure. He speaks of 'putting off the old man,' not old in the sense of having many years upon him, but old as compared with new, that which was former. A youth may put off the old man not in the sense of renouncing grey hairs, either physical or mental, but he may put off the old man by the renunciation of that hitherto prevailing spirit and life which he brought with him into this world, and for the destruction or renewal of which the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ alone is equal. Therefore St. Paul's teaching sanctions the main principle of all those who here, or anywhere else, say: 'The tree must be made good if the fruit is to be made good.'

¶ In a word, let Christ into the life, place Him on the centre, make Him Lord, give Him control, and then the life becomes renewed and reconstructed from the centre outwards. The old man will be put off, the old personality, with the old impulses, inclinations, ambitions; a new man will be put on, a man who, in Paul's words, 'is created after the image of God in the righteousness and holiness of truth' (Eph. v. 24). As Paul puts it again, 'Whenever a man comes to be in Christ, there is a new (or fresh) creation; what is old is gone, the new has come' (2 Cor. v. 17). With Christ, and no longer self, at the centre there is a 're-creation' or 'regeneration' of the life, a creation afresh of the whole man, which makes him, throughout the whole extent of his being, different from what he was.

Thus it is that Henry Drummond used to say to the students in Edinburgh and Glasgow: 'To become a Christian is to become ec-centric,' to put self off the centre and to become Christ-centred, Christo-centric. This is essential, fundamental Christianity, according to the New Testament standard—the Christ-centred, Christ-controlled life. Not first, not fundamentally, or essentially, a profession of belief in truths or doctrines even

about Christ—a man may profess belief in the sense of intellectual or 'notional' assent to any number of so-called 'essential' truths or doctrines without his life being thereby necessarily changed, 'the devils also believe,' says James (ii. 19)—but a personal surrender to Christ, leading to a new way of life, a life not for self but for God and Christ and our fellow-men.[1]

2. On the other hand, there is no sanction whatever in the writings or example of St. Paul for those who concentrate all their religious teaching, all their religious thinking, upon conversion—whose care is then completely satisfied, and who are uninterested in, or totally indifferent to, the subsequent courses of moral and spiritual cultivation. It is not uncommon to find some feeling of this kind among Christian people—that if a man only has, as we say, 'the root of the matter' in him there is really nothing more to be said. His character may present obvious deficiencies, but he has 'the root of the matter' in him. He has a gripping hand, and a rough tongue, and an irritable temper; but he has 'the root of the matter' in him; and it is irreverent and unkind to him, and a trifle heterodox, to make any persistent reference to deficiencies of character. Is there anything in the writings of St. Paul, who moves as an inspired master both in the sphere of doctrine and in the sphere of ethics (if, for a moment, we may speak of them as different spheres)—is there anything in the writings of St. Paul to sanction that perverted and enfeebled evangelism whose alpha and omega of spiritual concern is for a spiritual crisis in the life? It is very plain that St. Paul does not take for granted that when a man is converted, or made a new creature in Christ Jesus, he will necessarily, and as a matter of course, and without pains and discipline, attain to the completeness of life and character. He does not assume that the process has been set in motion which of necessity will complete its curve, will round its orbit, calling for no further care. On the contrary, when St. Paul is able to address those who were dead in trespasses and sins, who walked according to the course of this world, but whom now 'hath he quickened . . . together with Christ'—when he can address men in that strain then he begins in large and generous earnest his great course of ethical culture and instruction.

¶ If you are urged to escape from polar winter, with its ice, and snow, and frost, and barrenness, to tropical summer, with its warmth, and flowers, and geniality, and luxuriance, is it meant that you are to accomplish the journey at one long stride, or that it is to be completed step by step, little by little? When a child is required to become perfect as a musician, is it intended that in one day his uncrafty fingers shall liberate the angel-strains that are jailed in the musical instrument? Or is it meant that he shall master the gamut, and grope his way through the scale, and gently touch the unknown notes to ascertain, as if by a whisper, whether they are the strains of which he is in quest, and proceed with all diligence and zeal until the instrument shall tell all its secrets, and shake with many-voiced delight at the touch of his friendly hand? Were you to tell an acorn to become perfect as an oak, would you mean that all the growing was to be completed in a night, or that the development was to proceed gradually, unfolding branch after branch, bud after bud, leaf after leaf, till it became a great cathedral-tree, in which the feathered choristers should pour out their songs in the hearing of God?[1]

[1] J. M. Shaw, *The Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God*, 178.

The Power of Christian Character.

Eph. iv. 17.—'Walk not as other Gentiles walk.'

As we look back upon the history of the Church during the last five and twenty years we cannot fail to be struck by the activity in her life. There has been a constant and alert self-criticism. There have been incessant conferences to discuss her failings, and move-

[1] J. Parker.

ments to put those failings right. Efforts to improve pastoral effectiveness in the Church have been made on every side, and far-reaching reforms have been effected in the machinery and organization of the Church. But while thanking God for all these evident signs of life, we cannot help experiencing a feeling akin to disappointment at the apparently small results which have attended those efforts. The number of those who live in loyal communion with the Church shows no increase. The hold of the Church upon all classes and its influence upon the life of the nation seem if anything to decrease.

We are therefore driven to ask the reason for this failure in results. And to our inquiries there is one answer whose truth cannot be denied. It is this: that in our activities we have not put first things first.

What are these first things? Our text suggests one of them: it is Christian character. St. Paul appeals to his readers to show forth to the world a truly Christian character. 'Walk not as other Gentiles walk,' he writes. There was to be a marked difference between their characters and those of the heathen who surrounded them. He proceeds to illustrate that difference. It will show itself in thought, word, and deed. In thought the Christian is to be kind, tender-hearted, forgiving, in contrast to the bitterness, anger and wrath of the unregenerate heart. In word he is to be truthful and pure, in contrast to the untruthfulness and corruption of the old life; in deed he is to be honest and industrious that he may serve the world. Love, truth, purity, service—these are to be the notes of the Christian character.

In making this demand the Apostle was only demanding that which had always characterized the Christian community when it was at its best. There was a very real difference between the life of the Christian Church and that of the Pagan world around. An early unknown writer describes it thus: 'What the soul is in the body, that are Christians in the world.' And it was this contrast which startled the world. Some it infuriated and turned into persecutors. Upon others it exercised so great a fascination that it led them to join the Church. But the character of the Christians did not only win men to Christ; it also, rather than any programme of Christianity, changed the character of Western society. Carlyle writes: 'How did Christianity rise and spread among men? Was it by institutions and establishments and well-arranged systems of mechanism? No. It arose in the mystic deep of men's souls, and was spread by the preaching of the Word by simple, altogether natural and individual effort, and flew like hallowed fire from heart to heart till all were purified and illuminated by it. It was a number of men and women in all ranks of society pledged to live a definite life that changed the world, rather than any society with a definite programme or specific organisation.' If, then, Christian character has been one of the great factors in winning the world to Christ and utterly changing the standards of the Western world, it must always be remembered among those first things which we Christians can never neglect.

But if this is so, how do we stand to-day? 'Walk not as other Gentiles walk.' How far are we obeying the Apostolic precept? Is there a difference between the character of those who are Christians and that of those who are not? Is it something, this Christian character, which startles the world into violent opposition or passionate admiration? Is it something which by itself is transforming society? It ill becomes any of us to be censorious, but as we put these questions to ourselves we cannot but be filled with penitence, for we know only too well that here is one of our failings. We fail to show to the world that character in which the great notes are love, truth, purity and service. We fail to obey the precept of St. Paul, 'Walk not as other Gentiles walk.' Christian character does not stand out in the life of our land to-day as something clear and unmistakable.

The consequence of this failure is lamentable. On the one hand men are not won to the Church. They see within its borders people like to themselves in character, and they have no desire to enter. No saying is more

common to clergymen who work in industrial parts than this: 'Those who go to church are no better than those who do not go, therefore we do not wish to be members of the Church'. On every side we hear of new methods of evangelizing these outsiders, new methods of telling them what a wonderful thing the Christian religion is. But all these should be unnecessary, for the great method of evangelization should be the Christian character. And on the other hand our failure in Christian character accounts for the weakness of the Church's influence on national life. If in every walk of life, in society, in the workshop, in the mess, in the business house, were men and women of real Christian character, the Church would be influencing the world in a way it fails to do now. For no programme of reform can take the place of character as an instrument of reform.

What, then, must we do? The answer is clear: we must put first things first. While admitting to the fullest the necessity of working for reform in our machinery and organization, we must put first the need that all who call themselves by Christ's name should live the Christian life. Being must take precedence of doing. What the world needs to-day is men and women of Christian character; and if we are to be of this character, ever in our ears must be ringing the words, 'Walk not as other Gentiles walk.' We must realize that we who own Christ as Lord should be different from those who make no profession. We are called to be a peculiar people, and we can only help the world if we are willing to be different from it.[1]

¶ The Christians are many, but where is the Christianity? Many bear the name of Christ, but do not see that the religion of Christ first demands the Christ-like character.'[2]

¶ The writer travelled to Southampton with a smart 'man about town,' and when all others had left the carriage he ventured to ask him what was his attitude to Jesus Christ? 'Oh, I have no use for religion.' After a further talk we parted; and, thanking me for showing interest in his spiritual life, he added, 'The fact is I had the misfortune of being brought up in a Christian home. My people were in India, and I lived with two aunts who spent the whole of their time in "good works" and attending church services. But their un-Christian criticisms of others and their nagging tongues in the house set me against "religion." So it is of no use for you to talk to me, Sir.'[1]

[1] F. C. T. Hawkes.
[2] W. B. Carpenter.

Past Feeling.

Eph. iv. 19.—'Being past feeling.'

That is a condition of most deadly impoverishment. To be incapable of noble emotion! Let us not limit the impoverishment to incapacity of sorrow, and still less to the inability to shed tears. There is often very deep feeling where tears are never seen. There is a dry type of emotion, and it is often most poignant and profound. Bishop Westcott once said that God had denied him the helpful enduement of tears. And yet everybody knows that he was gifted with most sensitive sympathies, and he bore the griefs and carried the sorrows of all the countryside. Tears are not always the symbols of fine emotion, and their absence does not mean that there are no tidal movements of feeling in the depths of the heart. Indeed, the feeling may be all the more fervent because it is denied the expression of tears.

But at present let us think of the moral condition when the capital of noble feeling begins to shrink, and the man is brought into a state of emotional bankruptcy. For instance, there is the fine feeling which registers the distinction between right and wrong. It is not so much a mental discernment as a moral sense. It is a kind of spiritual palate which tests and discriminates the moral qualities of moods and actions. Indeed, the patriarch Job used this very figure of speech when he asked, 'Cannot my palate discern perverse things?' He knew the perversity by its taste. He detected and loathed it, as the physical palate

[1] *The Happy Christian*, 136.

detects and rejects tainted food. But this fine palate can lose its power of discernment. We can abuse it. We can drug it. We can stupefy it until it becomes numb. Let an expert tea-taster defile his mouth with some strong alcoholic stimulant and his power of discrimination is lost. All teas taste alike, the good, the bad, and the indifferent, and he is incompetent to appreciate the delicate flavours of the excellent. And let a man drench his moral palate with strong doses of disobedience, and it will speedily lose its refinement, first of all becoming incapable of relishing the superlative things, and then mingling good and bad together in a common insensitiveness. The soul becomes past feeling.

1. It is even so with every kind of noble emotion which is purposed to be a safe director amid all the mixed and perplexing values of life. Our power of common sympathy is intended to be an extra sense by which we are to perceive the joys and griefs of our fellows. We are to taste the waters of their life, and according as they are sweet or bitter we are to weep with them that weep and rejoice with them that rejoice. But we can neglect our sympathies. We can pay them no attention. We can refuse to give them expression, and expression is the very oxygen by which alone they can survive. Deny the oxygen and they are smothered. They first become drowsy, and then they become numb. The soul is past feeling.

¶ A kind-hearted German soldier named Fritz was marching with others through their first French village. A mother was standing in a doorway with her baby. One of the men rushed up with a hideous laugh and did something so horrible I couldn't possibly tell you of it. Fritz sobbed with rage and sorrow, but didn't rebuke the other. Next day he saw another act just as cruel. He shed a few tears, but said nothing. Next day he saw another cruel act, and he shed no tears. Next day another, and he smiled. Next day another, and he laughed. Next day another, and who was it that did it? Yes, it was Fritz himself. His conscience made him sob with sorrow the first time, but the result of *saying nothing* to show his righteous anger was that his conscience gradually ceased to speak, until it gave him no more pain.[1]

2. And pre-eminently is all this true of the noblest sense of the soul, our feeling for God. We cannot define this sense. We cannot describe it. It is 'a sense sublime of Something far more deeply interfused.' It is the feeling of a Presence. In the Christian life it is the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. And this holy sense can be drugged. Sin does it. Prayerlessness does it. Carelessness does it. Who is there among Christian believers who has not known how some unforgiven sin has clouded his sense of God the whole day long?

¶ 'I once entered a farm house,' said a pastor, 'on a chilly November evening, and spent an hour in personal religious conversation with its inmates. The aged father of the family—a most kind and amiable man—followed me to the door, and stopped me on the porch. He took me by the hand, and most deliberately said: "I thank you for this visit, and hope it will not be the last. As you have just commenced your labours among us, I wish to give you a word of advice, based on my own experience. *Let us old people alone,* and devote your labours to the youth of your flock. Forty years ago, I was greatly anxious about my soul; many were then converted, but I was not one of them. During the ministry of Mr. M—, many more were converted, but I was not one of them. And now, for years, I have not *had a single feeling* on the subject! I know that I am a lost sinner; I know that I can only be saved through Jesus Christ; I feel persuaded that when I die, *I am lost!* I believe all you preach, but I feel it no more than if I were a block of marble. I expect to live and die just as I am. So leave us to ourselves, and our sins, and give your strength to the work of saving the young."'[2]

But it is the glory of our great Saviour that He can vitalize benumbed senses. He

[1] E. W. Shepheard-Walwyn, *The Starved Top-knot*, 123.

[2] T. L. Coyle, *Stirring the Eagle's Nest*, 284.

can restore withered limbs. He can raise the dead. He can break the bonds of sealed springs. 'For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.'

The Lesson and the Teacher.

Eph. iv. 20, 21.—'But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him.'

The Apostle has been describing in very severe terms the godlessness and corruption of heathenism. He reckons on the assent of the Ephesian Christians when he paints the society in which they lived as alienated from God, insensible to the restraints of conscience, and foul with all uncleanness. That was a picture of heathenism drawn from the life and submitted to the judgment of those who knew the original only too well. It has been reserved for modern eulogists to regard such statements as exaggerations. Those who knew heathenism from the inside knew that they were sober truth. The colonnades of the stately temple of Ephesus stank with proofs of their correctness.

Out of that mass of moral putridity these Christians had been dragged. But its effects still lingered in them, and it was all about them with its pestilential miasma. So the first thing that they needed was to be guarded against it.

¶ The reference in the word 'so' is to the pagan instruction which the Ephesians had been accustomed to. Some think there is a direct reference to the teaching of Plato. 'According to Plato,' says Rendel Harris, 'women were to be considered as in their prime, and in that sense serviceable to the re-inforcement of the community, up to the age of forty years and men up to the age of fifty-five. After that time the guardians relax their vigilance, "and as soon as the men and women are past the prescribed age, we shall allow them," says Plato, "free association," subject to certain necessary restrictions and with the approval of the priestess at Delphi. Moreover, as the context shows, he held infanticide in reserve, in case infanticide should be necessary. It may well be imagined that such a social doctrine, weighted by such a practice, would provoke the deepest hostility on the part of the first Christian teachers. I am now going to show you that the protest against it is in the New Testament and that it can be read as directly addressed to the Platonists who held by the teaching of the *Republic*.' He then quotes Eph. iv. 17-25 and adds, 'Paul is not criticising Ephesian Christians for their moral laxity, but pointing out that they sit under another teacher than the one who gave lax laws to the Greeks, and that His teaching is purity and truth. The sentence, "Ye did not learn that of Christ," implies that the Gentiles, whom he denounces, had learnt it of some other teacher, and it can only be Plato of whom they had so learned.'[1]

If that is so, we can see with what force the contrast between Plato and Christ would come home to the minds of the Ephesians, and why the emphasis is laid on the fact that Christ is everything—lesson and teacher.

1. Christ is the lesson: 'Ye did not so learn Christ.' Now, we generally talk about learning a subject, a language, a science, or an art; but we do not talk about learning people. But Paul says we are Christ's disciples, not only in the sense that we learn of Him as Teacher—which follows in the next clause—but that we learn Him as the theme of our study.

That is to say, the relation of the person of Jesus Christ to all that He has to teach and reveal to the world is altogether different from that of all other teachers of truth to the truths which they proclaim. We can accept the truths and dismiss into oblivion the men from whom we got them. But we cannot reject Christ and take Christianity. The two are inseparably united. For, with regard to all spiritual and all moral truth—truth about conduct and character—Jesus Christ *is* what He teaches.

We hear people talk nowadays about get-

[1] J. Rendel Harris, *Sidelights on New Testament Research*, 234, 236.

ting back to Christ. There is a sense in which that is true, and there is a sense in which it gives a very wrong idea. With a great many people who use this phrase it is a kind of contemptuous way of treating Paul. They would say, that is, do not let us get away from Paul; but let us get back to Christ. If they mean to compliment Jesus at the expense of Paul they are wrong, because a large part of what we know about Christ we get through Paul. Still there is a sense in which it is true that the great topic of thought in the Christian life—the *locus* of inquiry—is Christ. We are perhaps brought more familiarly into this relation through the abundant lives of Christ that have been written during the past forty years.

Why should we read the life of Christ? Why should we read anybody's life? Is it not enough for a man to live his life and die? What is the use of writing up the story of that existence for other people? There is no reason except that a man is representative, or has been an enunciator of great ideas, or is the exemplar of an exceedingly pure and exceptional life. If a man be this, there is a reason why his life should be written, and why his survivors should be able to profit by his experience and know something of the elements that entered into that existence. Is Jesus Christ's a life that comes within this category? Is His not a worthy life to study for each of these three reasons?

Men say sometimes that we want religion without theology, and that we want just to get back to Jesus, and that we want to study the life of Jesus. We do want to study it, but not just as we want to study any other great life. We would not study any other great life in the way that men study the life of Jesus in the present day. Before we are aware of it we are deep in the problem of sin, and we want to know whether He was Divine, or human, or both, and what was the object that brought Him into the world. And before we know it we have discussed the doctrine of the Atonement. We cannot consider Jesus as a representative man and deal with that problem without dealing with the great theological *loci:* Temptation, Sin, the Incarnation, and the doctrine of the Atonement. Our Lord is not simply a representative man who is worthy of our notice because He was the enunciator of great ideas, out of which we can make a syllabus for an examination. What subject in life has He not touched and put His imperishable imprint upon it? Not one!

2. Christ is the Teacher: 'If so be that ye have *heard him* and been taught.' Now that 'if so be' is not the 'if' of uncertainty or doubt, but it is equivalent to 'if, as I know to be the case,' or '*since ye* have heard him.'

These Christians far away in Asia Minor, with seas and years between them and the plains of Galilee and the Cross of Calvary, are yet regarded by the Apostle as having listened to Jesus Christ. We, far away down the ages, and in another corner of the world, as really, without metaphor, may have Jesus Christ speaking to us, and may hear His voice. These Ephesians had heard Him, not only because they had heard about Him, or because they had heard Him speaking through His servant Paul and others, but because, as Paul believed, that Lord, who had spoken with human lips words when He was here on earth, when caught up into the third heaven was still speaking to men, even according to His own promise which He gave at the very close of His career, 'I have declared thy name unto my brethren, and *will* declare it.' So, though 'He began both to do and to teach' before He was taken up, after His ascension He continues both the doing and the teaching. And, in verity, we all may hear His voice speaking in the depths of our hearts; speaking through the renewed conscience; speaking by that Spirit who will guide us into all the truth that we need; speaking through the ages to all who will listen to His voice.

The conception of Christ as a Teacher which is held by many who deny His redeeming work and dismiss as incredible His divinity is altogether inadequate, unless it be supplemented by the belief that He now has and exercises the power of communicating wisdom and knowledge and warning and stimulus to wait-

ing hearts; and that when we hear within the depths of our souls the voice saying to us, 'This is the way, walk ye in it,' we may be sure that it is Christ Himself who speaks.

3. The test and result of having learned the lesson and listened to the Teacher is unlikeness to surrounding corruption.

'Ye have *not so* learned Christ.' Of course the hideous immoralities of Ephesus are largely, but by no means altogether, gone. Nineteen centuries of Christianity have to a very large extent changed the tone of society and influenced the moral judgments and practices even of persons who are not Christians. But there still remains a *world,* and there still remains unfilled up the gulf between the worldly and the godly life. And it is just as needful as ever it was, though in different ways, for Christians to exhibit unlikeness to the world. 'Not so,' must be our motto; or, as the Jewish patriot said, 'So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord.'

We need not make ourselves singular; we need not wear conventional badges of unlikeness to certain selected evil habits. A Christian man's unlikeness to the world consists a great deal more in doing or being what it does not do and is not than in not doing or being what it does and is. It is easy to abstain from conventional things; it is a great deal harder to put in practice the unworldly virtues of the Christian character.

If we do not find in ourselves the impulse to abstain from coarse enjoyments, to put our feet upon passions and desires, appetites and aims, which godless men recognize and obey without qualm or restraint, we need to ask ourselves: 'In what sense am I a Christian, or in what sense have I heard Christ?' It is a poor affair to fling away our faithful protest against the world's evils for the sake of receiving the world's smile. Modern Christianity is often not vital enough to be hated by a godless world; and it is not hated because it only deserves to be scorned. Let us keep near Jesus Christ, live in the light of His face, drink in the inspiration and instruction of His example, and the unlikeness to the world will come. Let us dwell near Him, keep in Him, and the likeness to Him will come, as it always comes to lovers, who grow to resemble that or those whom they love. 'It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.'

¶ A Scottish missionary, home on furlough from her work in India, told this story. She had been teaching a group of children one day, telling them the story of Jesus, bringing out, bit by bit, incidents showing His character. As she was talking one child, listening intently, grew excited, and then more excited. At last she was unable to restrain herself, and blurted eagerly out: 'I know him; *he lives near us.*'

Was there ever such praise of a human? Have any of us ever been taken or mistaken for Jesus? When folks begin to wonder in their secret hearts if it can possibly be that Jesus is back, living in you, in disguise, the sweetest victory of His grace will be told.[1]

Truth in Jesus.

Eph. iv. 21.—'Even as truth is in Jesus.'

This passage has supplied a phrase often used, namely, 'the truth as it is in Jesus.' We often hear it said, for example, that such or such a man preaches the truth as it is in Jesus,—that a dying person was comforted and supported by a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus,—that for the conversion of the world it is necessary to declare the truth as it is in Jesus,—and so on. But the words actually used by St. Paul differ from those in common use. What St. Paul says is this, 'as truth is in Jesus,' and not 'the truth as it is in Jesus.'

What is this 'truth'?

1. Taking the word in the largest sense of the Epistle, it is evident that it consists primarily in the purpose and calling of Divine grace and power as made known and experienced in Christ. In the opening words of the Epistle, St. Paul is occupied with the unfold-

[1] S. D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Home Ideals,* 110.

ing of this purpose in the redemptive life-history of Christ and in the spiritual experience which grows out of it. All such terms as 'the eternal purpose,' 'the dispensation of the mystery,' and the like—show that the substance of the truth consists in the fulfilment of the Divine end for mankind in Christ. All the particular truths that can be gathered about God, man, and the universe are made manifest in the fulfilment of this purpose and can be deduced from it. All such particular truths are held together and compose a living whole in the eternal purpose of God.

2. This, however, is not all. The eternal purpose is made manifest, not in a message, but in a Person. The purpose cannot even be conceived apart from its embodiment in Christ, who realizes it for mankind. According to the Epistle, we do not gain knowledge of God's purpose and then go to work to find out how Christ gave effect to it. We are presented with the living fact of Christ—His personality, His completed life-history, and His spiritual efficacy. In these, taken together, the eternal purpose of God is revealed by being made actually effectual. The eternal purpose of God thus revealed by being made effectual in Christ discloses the grace of His holy Fatherhood. Just as the Divine purpose cannot be separated from the person and work of the Son in whom it is fulfilled, so the character of the Father is only made known in and through His purpose of holy love. In that purpose, therefore, all the truth concerning God—His character, His relationships to mankind, His sovereignty over the universe—is contained.

The truth which is summed up in Christ was made known in and through His historic personality; truth is *in Jesus*. He stands not merely for the personal subject of certain historic facts and certain dogmas of the faith, but for a continuous source of revelation and influence: 'If so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him.' He is the substance of the truth, the continuous teacher of the truth, the spiritual sphere in which the truth can be learned, the historic personality in whom it is embodied and expressed.

¶ Plato is not Platonism; Platonism might have been taught though its author had never lived. Mohammed is not Islam; the Koran itself would warn us against any such confusion between the teacher of its doctrine and the substance of the doctrine itself. But Christ Himself is Christianity; His teaching is inextricably bound up with His Person; and it is not merely because He taught what He did, but because He is what He is, that through Him we can come to the Father.[1]

3. The truth is 'in Jesus'—it is embodied in the historic Jesus, not only as being in actual fact presented in an authentic life, but also because as a unique Personality He realized the whole meaning and accomplished the whole purpose of the Fatherhood of God. Thus Jesus is presented not only as a distinct and unique individuality, but as the Christ, having universally redemptive and spiritual relations towards mankind and the universe. The truth which manifests its reality in the historic Person reveals its meaning in the Christhood by which He sets forth and fulfils the eternal purpose of God for mankind and the universe.

Despised! Rejected by the priest-led roar
Of the multitude! The imperial purple flung
About the form the hissing scourge had stung,
Witnessing naked to the truth it bore!
True son of father true, I thee adore.
Even the mocking purple truthful hung
On thy true shoulders, bleeding its folds among,
For thou wast king, art king for evermore!
I know the Father: he knows me the truth.
Truth-witness, therefore the one essential king,
With thee I die, with thee live worshipping!
O human God, O brother, eldest born,
Never but thee was there a man in sooth,
Never a true crown but thy crown of thorn![2]

[1] H. P. Liddon.
[2] George Macdonald.

The Old Man and the New.

Eph. iv. 22.—'That ye put away the old man . . . and put on the new man.'

1. What are the marks of the 'old man'? There are three outstanding characteristics all found in one instructive passage in St. Luke's Gospel (ix. 46-56). There are here accounts of three different occasions when our Lord was constrained to rebuke His disciples for indulging a wrong disposition, for manifesting a wrong spirit of mind. It is also very significant that these three instances cover all vicious dispositions or bad tempers. The first evil disposition here rebuked is *ambition;* the second is *intolerance,* and the third is *vindictiveness.* When our Lord dealt with these three wrong tendencies He embraced in them, as representative forms of unholy dispositions, all other evil tempers, for all others are wrapped up in those three.

(1) *Ambition.*—The two brothers James and John, had joined with their mother in the request for seats on the right hand and the left in the Kingdom. But Jesus taught them that he who would be chief of all must, as Mark says, be 'servant of all,' 'even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve others, and to give his life a ransom for many.' The wrong disposition was ambition, whose motto is self-will, self-interest, getting up, and getting on, and getting ahead of others. Our Lord here taught them how evil the ambitious spirit is, and what evils are its offspring.

The determination to get on, to get up, to get ahead of other rival claimants, begets jealousy and envy, which are counterparts of each other. Jealousy is envy directed toward another's prospect of success; envy is jealousy directed towards his actual success. We are jealous of others *lest they should* do or should get; and we are envious of them *after they have* done or got. Ambition makes me jealous of my neighbour who bids fair to attain, accomplish, achieve, succeed; and makes me envious when he has accomplished and succeeded. Ambition also leads to covetousness, which is desiring what belongs to another, whether property, fame, intellectual gifts and attainments, or worldly success.

The soul and secret of perhaps a third of all the evils that curse humanity may be found in this one vice, ambition. It is found in the church of God:—in 'Diotrephes,' who still 'loveth to have the pre-eminence.' If there could be cast out of the Church all that evil spirit that is ambitious of office, of power, of influence, that is jealous lest other people should attain the pre-eminence, or envious of those who have attained it, what a true brotherhood the Church would become!

¶ It is possible for one to set before him a goal which is not only fixed for selfish aggrandisement, but in striving after which he unmakes and degrades his manhood. He destroys the noble qualities of soul, and makes himself the mere pursuer of that which is of the earth earthy. To use a homely illustration, he may become like a sporting dog with his nose on the ground and his eyes on the prey, quite heedless of the wide world and its glories by which he is surrounded. If an unholy ambition gets a man in his grip, it will make him stoop to things wholly unworthy of his best self. It may lead him to the forfeiture of self-respect. It may rob him of the capacity for fellowship with God and noble natures. It may initiate a process of atrophy which may starve out the life of the soul. Take, for example, some of the vulgar forms of ambition. Here is a seeker after place and power. Imagine a man who has set before himself the occupancy of some public position in municipal or national affairs. He is not possessed by great spiritual convictions, nor wedded to religious principles, but he has at least some remnant of the sense of self-esteem. But he says that at all costs he will be where he has purposed. He must have the suffrages of the electors. To be successful it will be necessary to secure the good-will of many men whose views in his own heart he despises, and to whom he must surrender his own opinions or convictions as the case may be. In such an instance policy may slay principle. For the

sake of votes and position he may barter his manly independence, and the words of Tennyson may be realized in all their biting rebuke:

Name and fame to fly sublime
Through the camps, the hall, the schools,
Is to be the ball of time
Bandied by the hand of fools.[1]

(2) *Intolerance.*—'And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us,' and, as Mark adds, 'There is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me.'

What is intolerance but the disposition to *compel uniformity in minor matters?* We often talk about the persecuting spirit of the Roman Catholics because they set up the Inquisition in Spain, and put people to the rack and various tortures, and even burned them at the stake because they did not bow to the Pope and worship the Virgin; but it is to be feared that there is not a denomination of Christians in the world that could be safely trusted with supreme power; human nature is too frail to hold an absolute sceptre. Whence came persecutions but from intolerance! There is no question that heresy is an error, but let us remember that intolerance is a vice and a sin, and persecution is a crime; so that not even in order to rebuke heresy must we cultivate a vice, encourage a sin, and commit a crime. The disposition to say to another, '*You must be like us,*' implies an immoral tone of mind!

¶ After one of the most disastrous battles in the American War, Gettysburgh, a man went into the hospital bearing with him aid and comfort which Massachusetts had sent, and he went round from cot to cot, and inquired, 'Any Massachusetts soldiers here?' Nobody answered. He continued going round, 'Any Massachusetts soldiers here?' Not a word. By-and-by, one voice answered, 'No! *Only United States soldiers here.*'[1]

(3) *Vindictiveness.*—He 'sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.' That is, the appearance was that He was going by them, and they took offence at the apparent slight, so that they would not extend their hospitality to Him. 'And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?' And our Lord replied: 'Ye know not *what manner of spirit* ye are of, for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.'

As ambition leads to envy and jealousy and covetousness, and as intolerance leads to bigotry and persecution and malice; so vindictiveness leads to the violation of every command of the Decalogue. There is not a form of crime, from lying up to murder, that revenge has not prompted, all through human history. There is a golden rule, 'Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them.' But there is a silver rule that men take instead of the golden rule, 'Whatever *other people do to you,* do you even so to them.'

¶ Dante was a great character, but his Divine Comedy rankles with abuse of his foes. He dipped his pen in ink, as Browning said, to print the stigma on his enemy's brow and let 'the wretch go festering through Florence.'

That it is natural thus to collect grudges is obvious, but even those who so defend it must admit that whenever we meet a character that does not indulge in resentment we recognize moral greatness. Stanton called Lincoln 'a low, cunning clown,' nick-named him 'the original gorilla,' said that Du Chaillu was a fool to wander all the way to Africa in search of what he could so easily have found at Springfield, Illinois. Then Lincoln, who knew well what Stanton had said, made Stanton Secretary of War because he was the

[1] J. E. Wakerley, *The Making of Moral Manhood*, 92.

[1] A. T. Pierson, *The Heights of the Gospel*, 126.

best man for the place. Years afterward that same Stanton stood at the bedside of the martyred President in the little room across the street from Ford's theatre and, looking at the silent face, said, 'There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen.' A large part of Lincoln's hold on our affections is due to his magnanimity. 'You have more of that feeling of personal resentment than I have,' he said on one occasion. 'Perhaps I have too little of it, but I never thought it paid.' There is a new beatitude to which, when they see it incarnate, men always pay tribute: Blessed is the life that does not collect resentments.[1]

2. Now what are the marks of the 'new man'? If we turn again to Scripture we shall find them, and this time in a single verse of 2 Timothy (i. 7): 'God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness: but of power, and love, and discipline.' Passing by the negative spirit of fearfulness, we see that the characteristics of the new man are power, love, and discipline. And these three are in direct contrast to the marks of the old man: ambition, intolerance, vindictiveness.

(1) *Power.*—The ambitious man desires power. When he rests in God, he obtains the power which once he so unlawfully sought.

The Spirit makes a man a forceful personality—it gives him, as we should say, strength of character. Through our ever-multiplying electrical undertakings we are becoming familiarized in these days with the word 'dynamo.' The 'dynamo,' everyone knows, is the machine which generates the electric current—that mysterious but tremendous force which lights our streets, drives our cars, and runs our machinery. The dynamo is the generator of all that energy, and, though we may not scientifically understand it, is identified in our minds with the idea of immense and almost irresistible power. Now, the word 'dynamo' is exactly the same word as the word translated 'power' in the New Testament. 'Dynamo' is, indeed, simply the Anglicized form of this Greek word *dynamis*. And that, St. Paul says, is what the Spirit is—it is a dynamo, a fountain of energy and force, and its first effect is to give a man a power unknown before. Just as those lamps which in the day-time are dull and grey begin at night to burn and shine; just as those cars which stand motionless in the streets are able, seemingly without effort, to breast even steep hills when once brought into contact with the electric current, so exactly, no matter how weak, and limp, and ineffective a man may be, the 'dynamo' of the Spirit can charge him with resistless and victorious power. It lifts men to higher levels so that they fling themselves with courage and confidence into tasks they deemed impossible before.

¶ The Spirit came upon Francis in Assisi, so that, though he had neither wealth nor station, he entered upon the task of regenerating Italy. It came upon Martin Luther when he was an unknown lecturer on theology in Wittenberg, so that he dared to fling down his challenge to Emperor and Cardinals and Pope. It came upon John Wesley, so that, casting convention and red tape to the four winds, he entered upon the task of evangelizing this kingdom from one end of it to the other. It came upon Robert Morrison so that he addressed himself to the task of carrying the gospel to China. 'Do you imagine you are going to convert China?' asked the captain of the ship in which he sailed, with a sneer. 'No,' replied Morrison, 'but I believe God will.' That was it. He had the sense of God, and that banished all diffidence and fear.[1]

(2) *Love.*—The spirit of love is the organ of vision. The finest knowledge is gained by the finest feeling. Sympathy is the great interpreter of secrets. Love is sight. It is only the loveless who are blind. The loveless do not see the beauties of Nature. It is only when love is enthroned that there is 'a new heaven and a new earth,' and that 'all things become new.' The loveless do not see the truth of humanity. It is Love who sees the wickedness of the city, and weeps over it. It is Love who sees the lingering beauty in a

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character*, 164.

[1] J. D. Jones.

Magdalene, and yearns over it. The capacity of love is the capacity to judge. If we are to know the truth of things, we need the spirit of love.

(3) *Discipline.*—We are made so as to need the exercise continually of firm and resolute self-government. We have tastes and desires which to make the guides of life, or to gratify without stint and without restraint, is ruinous. Blind passions are not meant to guide seeing reason; but if reason be the eye it is meant to guide the blind. We have only to look at ourselves and see how there are in us a whole clamorous mob of desires imperatively demanding sustenance; and, further, to mark how in each man there is a voice that says, 'Thou shalt, thou shalt not; thou oughtest, thou oughtest not' — we need only look at ourselves to know that he is meant to coerce and keep well down under hatches all these blind propensions and desires, and to set sovereign above them a will that cannot be bribed, a reason that will not be deceived, and a conscience that will be true to God.

What is the use of saying that to men who cannot govern themselves, whose very disease is that they cannot? It is no use to tell a discrowned and deposed monarch to rule his kingdom. The mischief is that it is in full revolt, and he has no soldiers behind him.

There is only one thing that will give complete self-command. Trust to Jesus Christ; ask Him to govern, and He will help you to control yourselves. That is the noblest conquest that any man can make. 'Every man is a king, and crowns himself when he puts on his own hat,' says our quaint moralist. Wherever you are master, be master inside your own soul. And that you may, be the servant of Him who alone will make you master of yourself and of the world.

Falsehood.

Eph. iv. 25.—'Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.'

TRUTHFULNESS, although theoretically held to be an important part of morality in most religions, has been very inadequately represented in the practice of all. If authoritative teaching on the subject could have determined human conduct, the race would have been by this time conspicuously truthful. In the sacred books of India truthfulness is highly celebrated, but all witnesses agree that the natives of India, whatever other virtues they may possess, are not truthful. Herodotus tells us that the Persians held lying to be the foulest of all sins, and Zoroaster did certainly teach that truthfulness is a most sacred duty; but the modern Persians are distinguished among Mohammedan people by their inveterate duplicity. Plato taught the Greeks that the habit of lying makes the soul ugly, and that truth is the beginning of every good thing both of God and of man; and yet the Greeks bore a very evil reputation among the ancients as incorrigible liars. The truthfulness of the Romans was indeed proverbial, and found expression in the law of the twelve tables, but a candid examination of their history hardly bears out their reputation, and contains many flagrant instances of treachery. The Hebrew prophet taught that God required 'truth in the inward parts,' and that no hypocrisy will pass muster with Him; 'Lying lips,' runs the proverb, 'are an abomination to the Lord, and they that deal truly are his delight.' The religion of Jesus adopted and developed the moral teachings of the Hebrew prophet; beyond any other religion Christianity insists upon the obligation of truthfulness; the Divine Founder declared Himself to be 'The Way, the Truth, and the Life'; He came, He said 'to bear witness unto the truth,' and His message commanded all to love and practise truth. Accordingly when His Apostles had gathered converts in the cities of the Empire, and had to lay down for their guidance the rule of Christian living, we find that they too laid much emphasis upon all the virtues which belong to the noble family of truth; honesty, straight dealing, candour, truthfulness in speech, simplicity of mind, these are frequently insisted upon in the Apostolic writings, and our text is a representative admonition.[1]

[1] H. H. Henson.

There are at least two faults that bear the name of falsehood. There is a carelessness about the truth, and there is a habit or trick of deliberate deception. In both it would be true to say that the practice of untruthfulness is never adopted for its own sake. No one in his sound senses lies for the sake of lying, or deceives merely for the sake of deceiving.

But in the one case he is careless of truth because he wishes to believe without evidence, or because he hates the man or the cause about whom he reports, or credits what is untrue because he does not care enough about the matter in hand to examine the facts before he states the conclusion, or repeats a rumour because he likes to afford amusement, or wants to be supposed to know something that the world at large does not know.

In the other case, he has a more definite end in view—either to make game, or to win influence, or to overthrow a rival, or to injure a foe, or to hide something that he thinks would damage him if it were known, or make people think him better, wiser, richer than he is.

The two forms exist separately, but they also exist together. The man who is careless about truth as often as not cares little about being himself deceived, whilst the practised cheat is wary enough as to what he believes. But between the two there lie many degrees of untruthfulness, and here are found men who are at once deceivers and being deceived. It is in all probability within this range that the evils that exist to-day are to be found, and within which we ourselves ought to be on guard against temptation.

¶ Lying in its subtler forms is a vice of civilization. There are liars in the Bible. Gehazi could tell a lie and get property by it; but it was a very elementary sort of swindle. Peter told a cowardly lie to escape danger. Ananias told a mean lie to cheat the Church. These rude, blunt denials of the truth, with their swift punishment, are recorded for our warning. But the art of lying has made great advances since the time of Gehazi and Ananias. The sword of Goliath would doubtless be thought a poor bit of workmanship in Sheffield; and the lie of Gehazi seems as poor an accomplishment by the side of the performances of a modern liar as the riddle of Samson by the *jeux d'esprit* of a modern wit.[1]

Let us enumerate some of the forms of deception prevalent to-day.

1. *Commercial untruthfulness.*—First comes that commercial untruthfulness of which we hear so much in the world of business. The selling of adulterated goods as genuine, the advertising of useless nostrums as specific remedies, the daily issue of prospectuses of investments offering more interest for the money than any sane and honest investment can really produce, seem, when described in simple language, undistinguishable from gross deception. And yet newspapers are full of them; every post delivers something of them. We dare not think that they are all the handiwork of cunning rogues. No; they are not. They can justify themselves by the assertion that the exaggerations of their statements are a fashion of speech, a trick of trade; that the purchaser of the adulterated goods buys at his peril, and knows, or ought to know, that he cannot have the genuine thing at so cheap a rate; that the advertisement is part of a joke; that the prospectuses, to be read at all, must be read with an amount of discount that will turn the policies into puffs, and categorical statements into probabilities or chances; that the promises of gain are not intended to deceive, but to call attention to the thing proposed; and that, at all events, it is the duty of the investor to ascertain the truth of them before he invests, or to complain only of his stupidity if he is deceived. And yet, although they who do such things must know that they are shutting their eyes to their own crime; that they do deceive the unwary; that they ruin the poor; that they tantalize and aggravate the miseries of the sick; that they take an unfair advantage, primarily of those who cannot help themselves; still they persist, and are greatly offended if personally they are

[1] C. A. Vince.

stigmatized by the name they deserve. If they do not live by deceit, they live by gain purchased by deceit.

¶ In Winston Churchill's book, *The Inside of the Cup,* the description of what the Church cannot be and cannot tolerate in its members without its own stultification is put into the mouth of a working-man, Garvin, who has lost his fortune, and is in danger of losing his child, as the result of the dishonest dealings of the prominent churchman, Eldon Parr.

'Well, I was a Traction sucker, all right, and I guess you wouldn't have to walk more than two blocks to find another in this neighbourhood. You think Eldon Parr's a big, noble man, don't you? You're proud to run his church, ain't you? You wouldn't believe there was a time when I thought he was a big man, when I was kind of proud to live in the same city with him. *She'll* tell you how I used to come home from the store and talk about him after supper, and hope that the kid there would grow up into a financier like Eldon Parr. The boys at the store talked about him: he sort of laid hold on our imaginations with the library he gave, and Elmwood Park, and the picture of the big organ in your church in the newspapers—and sometimes, Mary and me and the boy, in the baby carriage, on Sunday afternoons we used to walk around by his house, just to look at it. You couldn't have got me to believe that Eldon Parr would put his name to anything that wasn't straight.

Then Consolidated Tractions came along, with Parr's name behind it. Everybody was talking about it, and how it was payin' eight per cent. from the start, and extra dividends and all, and what a marvel of finance it was. Before the kid came, as soon as I married her, we began to save up for him. We didn't go to the theaters or nothing. Well, I put it all, five thousand dollars, into Consolidated. She'll tell you how we sat up half the night after we got the first dividend talking about how we'd send the kid to college, and after we went to bed we couldn't sleep. It wasn't more than a year after that we began to hear things—and we couldn't sleep for sure, and the dividends stopped and the stock tumbled. Even then I wouldn't believe it of him, that he'd take poor people's money that way when he had more than he knew what to do with. I made up my mind if I went down to see him and told him about it, he'd make it right. I asked the boss for an hour off, and headed for the Parr building—I've been there as much as fifty times since—but he don't bother with small fry. The clerks laugh when they see me coming. I got sick worryin', and when I was strong enough to be around they'd filled my job at the grocery, and it wasn't long before we had to move out of our little home in Alder Street. We've been movin' ever since,' he cried, and tears of weakness were in his eyes, 'until we've come to *this,* and we'll have to get out of here in another week. God knows where we'll go then.

Then I found out how he done it—from a lawyer. The lawyer laughed at me, too. Say, do you wonder I ain't got much use for your church people? Parr got a corporation lawyer named Langmaid—he's another one of your millionaire crooks—to fix it up and get around the law and keep him out of jail. And then they had to settle with Tom Beatty for something like three hundred thousand. You know who Beatty is—he owns this city—his saloon's around here on Elm Street. All the crooks had to be squared. 'Say,' he demanded aggressively, 'are Parr and Langmaid any better than Beatty, or any of the hold-up men Beatty covers?' There's a street walker over there in those flats that's got a million times more chance to get to heaven—if there is any—than those financiers, as they call 'emselves! I ain't much on high finance, but I've got some respect for a second story man now—*he* takes some risks! I'll tell you what *they* did, they bought up the short car lines that didn't pay and sold 'em to *themselves* for fifty times as much as they were worth; and they got controlling interests in the big lines and leased 'em to themselves with dividends guaranteed as high as eighteen per cent. They capitalized the Consolidated for more millions than a little man like me can think of, and we handed 'em our money because we thought

they were honest. We thought the men who listed the stock on the Exchange were honest. And when the crash came, they'd got away with the swag, like any common housebreakers. There were dummy directors, and a dummy president. Eldon Parr didn't have a share—sold out everything when she went over two hundred, but you bet he kept his stock in the leased lines, which guarantee more than they earn. He cleaned up five million, they say. . . . My money—the money that might give that boy fresh air, and good doctors. . . . Say, you believe in hell, don't you? You tell Eldon Parr to keep his charity—he can't send any of it here. And you'd better go back to that church of his and pray to keep his soul out of hell.'

2. *Gossip.*—Gossip is another form of lying which is a feature of the time. There is to-day an insatiable desire for sensational gossip, regardless either of truth or of the duty of minding one's own business. Conversation is full of personal anecdote; papers are crammed with rumour. There is an appetite not so much for scandal as for frivolous details about the lives of others, disparaging stories about public men, minute glimpses of less known, and less desirable to be known, events, an anxiety to hear every day, and retail, something that may call out a smile or a sneer—an appetite that grows by the garbage that it feeds upon, and is, perhaps, one of the meanest, because the most objectless, of social vices. We cannot pass along the streets without having thrust upon us papers that are composed for the purpose of pandering to the lowest form of this vice, and we can scarcely exclude from our own houses others which, whilst they may be acquitted of the baser form, are still guilty of utter disregard of truth wherever they can be amusing.

3. *Controversial lying.*—If the last form of untruthfulness is contemptible because it is purposeless, what is to be said of controversial lying? There is no doubt, at the bottom, an idea that the end sanctifies the means, and often it happens in controversial life that the advocate of a cause believes so sincerely in his own cause that he cannot believe that any honest man will take the other side. He believes that his opponents are rogues, and, being rogues, he welcomes, without proving it, any charge that may be made against them. Nay, he scruples little to invent for them principles and even adventures that he deems the suitable and natural outcome of the character which he presumes they bear. The controversial spirit is not peculiar to the theologian, the politician, the economist, or the man of science, and when it adopts the method of untruthfulness, it has least of all the excuse with which it consoles itself; for in each of these cases the true object of investigation is truth, and the real end of controversy is not victory, but real knowledge.

¶ Very often the misrepresentation of the opponents is indirect. It is not actually stated that they deny certain truths, but by making a great parade of proving them it is implied that they do. One of the most common fallacies going is the 'ignoratio elenchi,' in which that is disproved which never had been asserted, and proved which never had been denied. When it is required to make a telling argument in defence of a bad cause, the rule most commonly acted on is this: Select, in order to prove it, a syllogism of which one premiss is true and the other false; silently take the false premiss for granted, and display all your ability in proving the true one. You thus not only gain the credit of having delivered a convincing argument, but you often succeed in casting on your opponents the odium of having denied what you have been at such elaborate pains to establish.[1]

4. *False pretension.*—There is a sort of social rivalry in which no man likes to be thought worse educated, or more meanly born, or less influential, or less popular, or less rich than those who live in the same circle. This rivalry can be supported only by concealments or assertions that imply more or less than the full truth. Paltry as is the end to be gained—so paltry that the moralist may well be content

[1] G. Salmon, *Non-miraculous Christianity*, 346.

to leave the vice itself to the scourge of the caricaturist—the evil that is at work is not paltry, for this sin is as unmanly, as unwomanly, as are the baser sorts of deception. To know that in order to take our stand beside our neighbours we must falsely profess to have an income, or ancestry, or education, or circle of associates that we have not is degrading, is a thing to blush for—it is so mean. Is it so uncommon that we are not likely to be tempted into it? The whole outer life may be a lie, and the whole energy of the mind that may be engrossed in maintaining that outward life may be spent in maintaining the lie.

¶ Keeping up appearances is one of the greatest social evils of the age. There is a general effort, more particularly among the middle and upper classes, of seeming to be something that they are not. They put on appearances, live a life of sham, and endeavour to look something superior to what they really are. Respectability is one of the chief aims. Respectability, regarded in its true sense, is a desirable thing. To be respected on right grounds is an object which every man and woman is justified in obtaining. But modern respectability consists of external appearances. It means wearing fine clothes, dwelling in fine houses, and living in fine style. It looks to the outside—to sound, show, externals. In daily life we do not find that men and things are what we expected them to be. We move about among people having a theory of things; but directly that theory is touched by fact it falls asunder, and reveals the worthlessness as a standard by which to estimate the things of life.[1]

5. *Social hypocrisy.*—This is another form of falsehood so familiar, and so familiarly discounted, that it seldom deceives. We do not pretend to care a bit about one whom we may address as our dearest friend, or lament as our most esteemed and admired associate. The language of compliment, save as to pretending to wish to please when we do not really care to please, only want to seem to care, has ceased to have meaning, ceased almost to be mischievous; yet it is an ugly thing that men should use as mere custom words which have only a false meaning where they have any. Let there be all kindness and all gentleness, but why false profession? Even of the dead we are wont to speak with unreality because it reflects no credit to ourselves to remember the dead man's faults. Let us forget his faults, let us remember his virtues, but let us not lie! Smooth words of compliment and panegyric may be as straws which scarcely show the way the wind blows, but they are as false as the imputations of the controversialist and the inventions of the scandal-monger. So let us beware of the temptation that lies in them.

¶ 'I must admit,' Renan once confessed, 'that in the early part of my life I often told untruths, not in my own interest, but out of good nature and indifference, upon the mistaken idea which always induces me to take the view of the person with whom I may be conversing.' His sister broke him of this habit. He afterwards felt that he could claim a clean record. 'I am not aware (he says) of having told a single untruth since 1851, with the exception, of course, of the harmless stories and polite fibs which all casuists permit, as also the literary evasions which, in the interests of a higher truth, must be used to make up a well-poised phrase.'[1]

6. *Religious falsehood.*—Wherever a man professes more religion than he feels, there is an element of unreality, an element of falsehood. When a man pretends to be religious that he may impose upon his neighbour, we have no language too strong to be justifiably used in condemnation. That, we may be very sure, is a sin against the Holy Ghost, an insult to Divine love and Divine truth, which carries its own condemnation and judgment. But when a man professes more religion than he feels, because he wants to feel it, because he knows that he ought to feel it; when he gives his money to the poor, not because he cares

[1] H. W. Smith.

[1] H. Lewis, *Modern Nationalism*, 144.

for the poor, but because he knows that it is a part of his Christian profession, or because he sees his neighbours do the same; when he habitually attends church, for example, and utters good and holy words because he would like his children to believe them; when he prays to God for his children with an urgency that he does not feel, when he maintains a theory of morals which he wishes rather than tries to realize in his own life—are we to call that sort of unreality falsehood, or to brand him as a hypocrite because he does not publish to the world how far he falls below his own ideal, or how little he cares to do the thing that in his heart of hearts he knows to be right, and even would like to have the will to care to do? No; we do not class him with the man who goes about to deceive his neighbour; we do not like to condemn ourselves for falsehoods, because we know that our daily struggle is against such unreality.

But let us not conceal from ourselves that such unrealities once discovered, once acquiesced in, become falsehood; and habitual unreality is habitual falsehood. If our temptation lies here, we had better not be the first to throw the stone at those whose sins, although they may be more pernicious, are the fruit of the same root. Let us remember the words, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

Lying.

Eph. iv. 25.—'Speak ye truth.'

'THERE is no vice,' writes Lord Bacon in his celebrated Essay *Of Truth*, 'that doth so cover a Man with Shame, as to be found false, and perfidious.' And therefore Mountaigny saith prettily when he inquired the reason, why the word of the *Lie* should be such a Disgrace, and such an Odious Charge? Saith he, 'If it be well weighed, To say that a man lieth is as much as to say that he is brave towards God, and a Coward towards Men. For a *Lie* faces God, and shrinks from Man.' Lying is thus a kind of atheistical bravery; the practical acting up to the disbelief that God either hears, or will punish, the falsities of men on the earth. But there are other causes of lying besides spiritual cowardice and practical disbelief in God.

Temptations to untruthfulness generally assume one of three typical forms; (1) dread, (2) the desire to appear well in the eyes of others, (3) gain.

1. *Dread.*—This is a very common cause of untruthfulness. When children, for example, tell a lie, either surprise or fear is frequently the cause. Parents are often responsible for the falsehoods of their children. It is right that children should reverence their parents; nor can there be true reverence which is not mingled with an element of fear. But the dread which is prolific of falsehood is not always a personal dread; it is equally often a dread of consequences. Especially is this the case when any wrong has been committed. It is of the nature of wrong-doing to make a coward of the wrong-doer; and from the dread which accompanies guilty cowardice falsehoods are frequently multiplied. A lie rarely stands by itself. The first lie engenders fear, and as a result of fear other lies are told; and as the process is repeated, the conscience grows accustomed to a deadening familiarity with falsehood; the power to resist temptation is enfeebled; dread is added to dread; and under the accumulations of dread the sense of truth at length entirely disappears.

¶ I feel compelled to state here (what belongs to this part of my life) that towards one person I was habitually untruthful, from fear. To my mother I would in my childhood assert or deny any thing that would bring me through most easily. I remember denying various harmless things—playing a game at battledore, for one; and often without any apparent reason: and this was so exclusively to one person that, though there was remonstrance and punishment, I believe I was never regarded as a liar in the family.[1]

[1] *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, i. 89.

2. *Vanity,* or the desire to appear well in the eyes of others.—This desire often springs from a pure and noble source. For that man is either callous or degraded who is indifferent to the opinions of his fellow-men. The desire to stand well in the sight of others is one of the strongest and highest incentives to do well; the dread of the loss of the esteem of our fellow-men is a noble dread which often keeps us from doing wrong; and when we have done wrong the penalty of the loss of human esteem is one of the keenest penalties that sensitive souls are called upon to endure. When, therefore, we speak of the desire to appear well in the eyes of others as a common cause of untruthfulness, we speak of the corruption of a desire which, in its original essence, is noble and inspiring. Yet how general and widespread this corruption is! So widespread and general, indeed, that it is very rare to hear men give, with perfect fidelity to truth, an account of a transaction in which they themselves have been engaged. If the transaction is unworthy, or has not succeeded, they minish, or pass lightly over, their own share in it. If the transaction has been successful, or merits praise, immediately their own share in it grows eminently conspicuous. At first these diminutions, and exaggerations, are followed by qualms of conscience and a sense of shame. But, by degrees, all sense of this ethical discomfort is deadened; and the diminutions of self-blame and the exaggerations (direct or indirect, expressed or implied) of self-praise proceed almost unconsciously. At length, with scarcely any provocation whatever beyond the provocation of self-importance, people will say they have said things which they never said, or have done things which they never did. Their hold upon truthfulness is relaxed; and all harmony between what actually is, and what is said to have been, between the sober fact and the self-enlarging fiction, disappears and is gone.

¶ In its higher forms, as used by cultivated people, lying is a generous desire to be more entertaining than a plain statement of the case will warrant; to deck out a situation in colours contributed by the narrator's 'happy artistry.' Many of the most charming women in the world, some of the world's most famous men, especially those of the military and sportsman types, are half-unconsciously addicted to lying as the most natural way of making themselves and their experiences interesting.[1]

3. *The desire for advantage or gain.*—This motive is closely akin to the desire to be approved and to stand well with others, though it is less generous and more sordid. When anyone is untruthful through a longing for praise, the untruth, though wrong, is yet the corruption of a noble instinct. But when anyone is untruthful through desire of profit, the untruth is base as well as wrong. Of this sordid class are all trading and commercial untruths; all concealing of defects, all misrepresentations and misleadings, all false measures and false weights, all unjust prices and balances. Of this sordid class also are all political untruths; untruths told to injure a political antagonist or to advance a political cause. It is sometimes contended that tricks are necessary in trade; and that politics have no indissoluble connection with morals. Such a contention is the abnegation of all Christian ideals, of all practical belief in a God of superintending righteousness and truth. Commercial gain and political advantage may sometimes be obtained temporarily from a shrewd and clever lie. In the long run, even the cleverest lies do not pay, either in trade or politics, nearly so well as robust and consistent truth. But suppose, for a moment, that shrewd and clever lies were, either politically or commercially, profitable—what answer shall we give to Christ's tremendous questions: 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?' (Mark viii. 35-37, RV)? And every untruth, whether in word or act, is a nail in the coffin of life, eternal life.[2]

[1] W. D. Hyde, *The Gospel of Good Will*, 70.
[2] J. W. Diggle, *Sermons for Daily Life*, 197ff.

Solidarity.

Eph. iv. 25.—'We are members one of another.'

This Epistle, being a circular letter to the various churches of Asia Minor that centred round Ephesus, deals with the domestic and social difficulties of those to whom it is addressed; and social difficulties were by no means inconsiderable even in those early days of the Christian Church.

But all differences—differences between themselves and their Christian brethren, differences arising from tradition and habit—were done away in their learning of Christ, if so be that they had indeed learned Him to good effect. They had been renewed in the spirit of their minds, they had put on the new man, created after God's likeness, they had become members one of another. This is the lesson the Apostle drives home; this is the spirit that animated these early congregations, till Christian love, hand in hand with Christian courage, won its victory over the Roman world, and the old civilization passed away. This is the spirit by which each one of us must now be animated, if we would labour that the kingdom of this world should indeed become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

1. *In the Home.*—A well-ordered Christian home gives us the truest picture that we can find on earth of the home above. In the tender love of parents we get our first and best conceptions of the Divine Fatherhood, and in the pains and burdens which a mother suffers for her child is the everlasting type of that vicarious principle which is seated and enthroned in the very heart and government of God. Around the fireside, on the domestic hearth, we are for ever unconsciously weaving the 'pattern of things in the mount.' There, especially, we are reminded of the mystical bonds which make many lives one. The family is indeed one body. It is over-shadowed with the same anxieties, it trembles with the same fears, and is thrilled with the same joys. Parent and child, brother and sister, are roped together, and for the most part climb and fall together. The dishonour of one is the disgrace of all; the misfortune of one is the sorrow of all; the promotion of one is the elevation of all. When a son takes to evil ways he does something more than blacken his own character and imperil his own future: he darkens the lives of those about him, he wounds and half breaks the hearts that love him best. Each member of the household has the power of blessing or cursing the whole of it; each one can put the glow of pride or the blush of shame on every cheek; each one can set music playing or torturing worms gnawing in every heart. Whether it be father, mother, son, or daughter, not one of them 'perishes alone in his iniquity.' If one suffer, all suffer in a greater or less degree, and alas! those who suffer most are often those who deserve it least. In many a home in which sin is done there is a miniature Calvary where innocent ones bear the guilt, and perhaps in part expiate it; and in many a home where one lives near to Christ virtue flows from the garments of that one which more or less heals all.

¶ So deeply inherent is it in this life of ours that men have to suffer for each other's sins, so inevitably diffusive is human suffering, that even justice makes its victims, and we can conceive no retribution that does not spread beyond its mark in pulsations of unmerited pain.[1]

2. *In the Church.*—In the Church we are often only half conscious of the spirit, and in some churches it hardly finds a place. Strangers meet like touching circles, and edge one another off with the cold salute or glance of frigid unconcern. They never dream that that name of Jesus which they all repeat is mocked on the lips unless it kindles tenderness and affection in the heart. There are few of us who feel as sweetly akin as we ought to do when we kneel together at our Father's feet. We rarely take upon ourselves the troubles and anxieties of our fellow-members, as we

[1] George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss.*

bear the misfortunes that fall upon parent, child, or brother. Our Christian fellowship never more than approximates to the ideal which the Master showed. And yet, only a prejudiced unbelief would deny that there is more of warm and living sympathy, more endearing friendships and blessed fraternity among those who revere the Name than in any other assembly, club, or society, in the world. And wherever Christ's Presence is really felt, there the words of John Fawcett find an echo in every heart:

> We share our mutual woes,
> Our mutual burdens bear,
> And often for each other flows
> The sympathising tear.

3. *In the World.*—The world is joined by sympathetic cords. Railways, ships, and electric cables are all helping to reveal to us God's thought of His one family. He maketh the winds His angels, His messengers flaming fire, and all events, when rightly understood, enforce the gospel truth that 'He hath made of one blood all nations of men.' Think how, in the everyday occurrences of our city life and national life, we suffer with one another, and often for one another. Think how the selfish people who imagine that the sorrows, sins, woes, degradations, and despairs of others are no concern of theirs are constantly having it brought home to them, in painful ways, that their egotistical philosophy is contrary to God's law, and opposed to human facts. No man can live in luxurious wealth and ease, heedless of the penury and squalor about him, without sooner or later paying the penalty. We cannot have filth and disease in the courts and hovels of the poor but in due time some breath of infection will steal into the perfumed chambers of the wealthy. If there is fever in the sweater's den, where perhaps the rich man's clothes are made, that fever, in some unlucky day, will be carried into the mansion. If there are ignorance, drunkenness, and discontent among workmen, every manufacturer and capitalist will be the poorer for it. If there are swarms of neglected children, or children who are taught little of morals and religion, or children whose language is lewd and profane, growing up to manhood, it means coming mischief, anxiety, and sorrow for all classes of society. However we try to separate classes, we cannot. Mightier forces sweep away our barriers with a laugh of scorn. We say, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' A thousand voices answer, in tragic tones, 'Yes!' And if we refuse to recognize the fact, God will, in one way or another, make us pay for it. Do we take no interest in the moral well-being of the town we live in? Is it nothing to us whether good men rule its affairs or men of the indifferent sort? By and by the enormous folly of this selfishness will be demonstrated to us; for the immoralities, vices, corruptions of any class recoil in a hundred ways upon those who have neglected to deal with them. We are indeed bound together. Yes, sometimes in a way which it makes one nervous to think about.

In every quarter we find vicarious suffering. We find the good involved in the evil of the wicked, the just bearing the cross laid upon them by the doings of the unjust. Do we complain that it is not fair, and right and equal? Well, perhaps it is not fair, in our limited view. But we have to submit to it. It is God's established order, and it is done in God's wisdom and mercy, too. It is all to force upon us this truth, which we are very unwilling to learn—that we 'are members one of another.'

> 'Tis the sublime of man,
> Our noontide majesty, to know ourselves
> Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole,
> This fraternizes man, this constitutes
> Our charities and bearings, but 'tis God,
> Diffused through all, that doth make all, one whole.[1]

[1] Coleridge.

ANGER.

Eph. iv. 26.—'Be ye angry, and sin not.'
Col. iii. 8.—'But now put ye also away , . . anger.'
Pr. xvi. 32.—'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.'

From the texts quoted we may gather that anger is a somewhat doubtful quality. Yet apparently St. Paul contemplated the possibility of a man's being able to be angry and yet not sin: and we know that the Perfect Man was capable of a white heat of indignation. It would appear, then, that anger may be, as well as a vice, a neutral quality if not a positive virtue.

I.

THE VICE OF ANGER.

In itself, anger, like all natural emotions, is neither good nor bad. It is merely a force, a gunpowder of the soul which, according as it is directed, may blast away the obstructions of evil, or defend us from temptation as with a wall of fire, or which, again, may work devastating injury in our own and in other lives. But for our imperfect and ill-balanced moral natures the capacity for anger is a peculiarly dangerous possession. And since our self-love, rather than love to God or our neighbour, is apt to be our most sensitive spot, anger so generally has the character of mere personal resentment that this in fact is what we commonly understand by the word.

It is one of the primary emotions, which means it is practically universal. Because of this, it is apt, in the more extreme of its manifestations, to be regarded as a very venial offence. As a result, it is to be feared that many good people have very bad tempers. It is to be feared, too, that a bad temper is very often regarded as a misfortune rather than a sin. Men think that they are born to it; that it is no fault of theirs; that their temper deserves the sympathy of their friends rather than their censure. They seem to regard it very much as they would regard a heavy mortgage on an inherited estate, or any other evil which had come upon them from accident or from the wrong-doing of other people.

And yet there are terrible sentences in the New Testament about unjustifiable and uncontrollable anger. To yield to ungoverned passion is to 'give place to the devil.' To be 'angry without a cause' is to be 'in danger of the judgment.' It is not the outward act of sin that brings Divine judgment, any more than it is the outward act of worship that wins Divine approval. Physical actions in themselves are nothing to God, except as they indicate spiritual conditions which outlive the body and outlast the environment of this world. If, therefore, from fear of punishment, or from lack of courage, or from the pressure of circumstances, we never commit murder, we may still be arraigned before the dread tribunal of God's judgment-seat if we are angry with our brother, aye, even though our sinful temper does not express itself in word or deed.

1. *Christian teaching on the subject is very direct* but not always obeyed by those who profess to follow it. Indeed, it is rather humiliating to reflect how little governance of temper is made a part of Christian living, and how easily it is assumed that irritability or stubbornness or hastiness of temper is not at vital variance with the spirit or ordinance of Christ. Let us try then to master the gist and purport of Christ's teaching. Familiar words are often taken for granted, and very likely we have never asked ourselves what their meaning and intension is. 'But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother

without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca,* shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.' Christ gives us an ascending scale—threefold—of which the first is anger without cause, heedless and random anger, anger that cannot be justified. And for all such, He says, we are accountable to judgment. He does not say that no anger is right, or that all anger is wrong; but—for every angry word or thought you are *accountable,* you must stand before the judgment seat.

Christ's teaching is followed by that of the Apostles. Thus St. James, for instance, writes, 'Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.' Similarly, St. Paul writes to the Ephesians: 'Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. . . . Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.'

Therefore although there *is* a holy indignation, a righteous anger,—kindled, for instance, by the vision of wrong and oppression and wickedness—anger requires to be inspired and ruled at all times by the spirit of love. The anger to which men are most prone is unrighteous. Even righteous anger must be controlled by the spirit of Christ, lest it degenerate into personal hatred, or provoke men to deeds unworthy of those who serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Anger of the right sort is a splendid stimulant of the moral forces; but it is only a stimulant: it does not nourish the soul.

¶ In his graphic picture of 'Vindictive Anger' Watts depicts this evil passion as a vulture-headed human form which breaks through all bonds of reason when once aroused, and whose feet tread down with remorseless fury his victims. Nothing turns true affection to such bitterness, and kills the warmth of the human charities, and makes all duties hard, and all life miserable, as vindictive anger. That kind of anger cannot purify the soul or uplift it above all that is base and unworthy which is itself subject to the violence of personal feeling, and, instead of bringing men to a sense of right, itself violates the sense of right, and seeks to inflict pain and loss, instead of bettering the man who has done the injury.[1]

2. *Anger is to be condemned when it proceeds from evil causes.* The chief of these are three in number.

(1) The primary cause is usually *an excess of self-feeling.* This is true of all the anger that springs of vanity and of self-love. And what a mass of misery and discomfort that brings into life! First, there are the petulant, who live in the charged atmosphere of susceptibilities, and who resent fancied injuries, dwelling on supposed affronts, creating neglects or slights that never were intended. There is not only the touchy temper, taking umbrage at a word, and the sensitive temper, hurt at imaginary want of tact, but likewise the irritable temper, which resents a fault of manner or approach; the proud and overbearing temper, which defies all bounds of fairness, and flashes out in imperious demands; the jealous or sullen temper, which wears its cloud, but never frankly utters its complaint, or gives the chance of making up; the discontented temper, brooding over defects and disabilities; and the wilful temper, which rides rough-shod over scruples to gratify a whim.

(2) Along with this excess of self-feeling goes *a defective sense of proportion.* The man's consciousness is so full of himself that he can judge nothing else. Most likely we are all the while posing to ourselves as martyrs, thinking ourselves the most ill-used, the most misunderstood and unappreciated among God's creatures. To our jaundiced eyes others are perverse, unreasonable, not ourselves. This works itself into a vicious circle,

[1] J. Macmillan, *The Life-Work of George Frederic Watts,* 198.

for the lack of perception that leads to anger is made greater by it in turn. Temper interferes with the intellect in all matters of judgment. A quick temper really incapacitates for sound judgment. Decisions are struck off at a white heat, without time to collect grounds or hear explanations. Then it takes a humbler spirit than most of us possess to reverse them when once they are made. We ourselves are prejudiced in their favour simply because we have made them, and subsequent courses must generally do homage to our first precipitancy.

(3) To these qualities is usually superadded *a lack of control.* This is one of the gravest elements, for through it anger becomes disastrous not only to the angry man himself but to others. 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations* not unjustly calls rage and resentment the marks of an unmanly disposition, mildness and even temper being not only more humane, but more in accordance with the ideal of balanced, perfectly developed manhood.

¶ It is at our peril we let our anger degrade itself down to a bad temper. We must have the strength to hold it high for a beacon, and not turn it into a torch which hisses and smokes in the mire of mean and poor emotions; or waste this fine might of our proper manhood, as the vessels in our river blow off their steam, vexing everybody near them with the clamour, and then just swinging to the dock.[1]

3. *Anger is to be condemned when it produces evil results.* And it very often produces very evil ones. The consequences to others are enough to condemn it.

(1) It renders human intercourse disagreeable and intolerable. It closes men's hearts and checks their faith and confidence. It takes away from life its sweetness; it disturbs peace, and precludes the consolations of the Holy Spirit. Further, one of the essential points of Christian ethics is that those who are strong should do all in their power to help the weak. But what happens here? It is the weak who are the worst sufferers; for temper is the prerogative of superiors, and inferiors, down to the bottom of the scale, have not only to bear the brunt of the storm, but to sink their own judgment and spend their lives in ministering to what they know to be caprice. So their whole training is systematically false, and their own mental habits become disorganized and ruined.

But it is in the broader moral and social effects that the chief evil lies. It is astonishing how large a part of Christ's precepts is devoted solely to the inculcation of happiness. How much of His life, too, was spent simply in making people happy! There was no word more often on His lips than 'blessed,' and it is recognized by Him as a distinct end in life, *the* end for this life, to secure the happiness of others. And yet we who are supposed to be Christ's followers drive men from Christ's door many a time by our sorry entertainment. The Church is not spiritualized enough yet to entertain the world. We have no spiritual courtesies. We cultivate our faith and proclaim our hope, but forget that a greater than these is charity. Till men can say of us, 'They suffer long and are kind, they are not easily provoked, do not behave themselves unseemly, they bear all things, think no evil,' we have no chance against the world. One repulsive Christian will drive away a score of prodigals. God's love for poor sinners is very wonderful, but God's patience with ill-natured saints is a deeper mystery.

(2) The consequences to oneself are no less serious. Uncontrolled anger distorts the whole personality, making a man for the time being something other and lower than himself. It robs a man of dignity and makes him mean and despicable. As St. Basil says, anger changes a man into a brute animal, a wild beast, a rabid dog, a stinging scorpion, a serpent that bites and kills. Jeremy Taylor says of it: 'It makes a man's body monstrous, deformed, and contemptible; the voice horrid; the eyes cruel; the face pale or fiery; the gait fierce; the speech clamorous and loud. It is neither manly nor ingenious.' And this out-

[1] R. Collyer, *The Joy of Youth*, 181.

ward distortion is only the expression of a corresponding inner one. Enabling men to inflict pain upon others with a minimum of pain, or with actual pleasure, to themselves, anger readily allies itself with the worst dispositions and passions of human nature. It paralyses humane feeling. Under its influence malevolent men become ferocious fiends, and men who are not malevolent say and do what, when the tumult of the soul is past, fills them with regret and shame. It confuses the judgment. Seldom do we see largely or clearly in anger: seldom is it we have not reason to repent of decisions formed or courses of action entered upon under its influence. Even though we may be able to suppress the outward manifestations of anger, it may strike in and vitiate the general disposition, leaving us a terrible legacy that cannot be escaped. Dante, climbing the Mount of Purgatory, comes to the souls who march on to loose the knot of anger. The image is striking, for anger tangles up life into strange knots, and many a man has to walk far before he can disentangle matters which his hasty wrath has thrown into confusion.

I was angry with my friend;
My friend died.
My dead anger has decayed before me.
It reeks and sickens me.
I cannot escape from its bitter stench.[1]

4. *Anger is not an evil without remedy.* The remedy may be difficult to find at times, or rather, though easily found, it is not always easy to apply. But it is obvious that anger must be checked—that is part of our primary duty as civilized and Christian human beings.

How are we to do it, when the impulse is so strong? More than two thousand years ago a wise Greek—one of the wisest men who ever lived—put his finger on the chief element in the control of all strong impulses. It was fear of which he was thinking at the time, but the principle holds good for every strong rush of feeling. The best remedy against fear, said he, was to remember at all times and in all places what things are really to be feared—in other words, a man who is tempted to be afraid should hold fast to certain known acknowledged established principles, seen to be right before the temptation begins. And of course it is quite obvious that this holds good in any similar temptation to yield to an unworthy impulse, such as greed, lust, the desire for drink, or, as in the special case we are thinking of just now, anger. The great secret is to have such a firm and habitual grasp on certain fixed principles that they come to our aid even in the emergency of a strong temptation.

Now, what precisely does this mean when we come to put it into practice? If we remember all the evils of unbridled anger we shall be less likely to give way to it, and to adopt as far as possible the means of controlling it, of which the first, as with all sins, is to avoid, as far as possible, running into temptation. When the temptation *does* come, as come it must to everyone, we can at the worst try to restrain the outward expression. 'A fool uttereth his anger, but a wise man keepeth it back and stilleth it.' It is true of anger, as of fear or pain, that to let it find expression is to strengthen it, while to control its outward manifestation weakens its force. We all know how running away turns fear into panic: so giving rein to anger increases its force and makes it less possible to control it, while conversely, to check the frown or blow or harsh words helps to force back the emotion itself. This checking, too, can often be greatly helped by occupying the mind with something else.

But these, useful as they are, are only surface remedies. The real cure, the foundation of all the principles to which we are to hold constantly, and most of all when we are tempted to let them go, is something far deeper than that. It is to remember not only our Lord's condemnation of anger, but His behaviour when He was faced with all possible temptations to it—legitimate enough reasons, most of us would think—the cheap sneers of the respectable, the gaping wonder of crowds greedy for the latest sensation, the blunder-

[1] Susan Miles, *Dunch*, 53.

ing stupidity of His best friends; and, on the last night of His human life, the lies, the slander and insult, the brutal 'ragging' of the rough soldiers and hangers-on of the priest and governors, who crowned Him in mockery with sharp thorns, spat in His face, and jeered at His teaching, saying as they struck the blindfolded Man, 'Prophesy to us who it was that smote thee?' Yet He came forth when they bade Him, with the crown of thorns and the old purple robe they had put on Him as an ugly joke, and said no word of anger. And when He had hung for three hours on the cross, mocked by all the city that He loved and guarded by the rough foreign soldiers, who, coarse as they were, were kinder to Him than His own people, His gracious dignity and self-control drew from a rough Roman non-commissioned officer (who, we may take it, was not likely to be finely sensitive and to whom the sight of ugly death was part of his trade) the comment, "Truly this was a righteous man.'

If we keep this great example steadily and habitually in our minds, we are not likely to forget, even in temptation, that in order to reach 'the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,' one of the first things we must do is 'to put also away . . . anger.'

II.

THE VIRTUE OF ANGER.

Dangerous as it may be when it rises from the evil in us and is allowed to flow unchecked to evil ends, anger is yet a necessary thing and may be a noble one. There is a virtue of anger, as well as a vice. A man who is wrongly angry is by so much less a Christian: but though a man may be a Christian without being angry, he will hardly be a good Christian unless he can be angry at certain things and in certain ways. A noble anger has its own true place and its own fair use in our human life. It is good for ourselves and good for society, under some conditions, to be downright angry. Far better have an outburst of hot indignation than the cool cynical indifference which often prevails about wrong-doing, and which only too often springs not from Christian forbearance but from the spirit that asks, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'

It is true that fine and thoughtful men have sometimes denied this—Tolstoy, for instance, considers it an unmixed evil.

Mr. Craufurd, however, speaking of Tolstoy's sweeping condemnation of anger or conflict under any circumstances, says very justly 'Tolstoy's views appear to be not only exaggerated, but also to a great extent false and misleading. Probably his own passionate temperament caused him to see only the bad or injurious side of that state of mind. His teaching would have been far more well-balanced and satisfactory if he had read and digested the wise discourses of Bishop Butler about Resentment and the Forgiveness of Injuries. Butler saw clearly what the Russian moralist failed to perceive, that the feelings called anger and resentment have a real and legitimate place in the economy of human life. The world in general *does* perceive this fact—Christ is all the dearer to us because of His anger against the hypocrisy, tyranny, and cruelty of the Pharisees. When condemning anger itself as wrong in all circumstances, Tolstoy spoke unadvisedly and without adequate thought. What he really intended to condemn was undiscriminating anger—the anger that is a kind of temporary madness, the anger which sees only one side of a quarrel, the anger that makes no allowance for an opponent, the unchristian anger which quite ignores the abiding and universal duty of compassion. As Butler thought, St. Paul certainly made a distinction between wise anger and sin, when he gave us the precept, "Be ye angry, and sin not," which practically means, "Though ye be angry, sin not." The wise Bishop of Durham considered that all our distinctively human tendencies or qualities have a real meaning and value, whereas the Russian ascetic wished to extirpate or at least to suppress some of them. The abuse of a thing or a faculty does not prove that it has no use if dealt with thoughtfully.'[1]

[1] A. H. Craufurd, *The Religion and Ethics of Tolstoy*, 91.

Nor should we forget that the very 'temperament' which occasions the sin of the angry man, and which he sometimes pleads in alleviation of his guilt, renders possible forms of excellence which are unattainable by men whose blood is sluggish, and in whose souls no fire burns. Many of the noblest men that ever lived had slumbering volcanoes in them. The heat and impulse and vehemence which, when unrestrained, hurry us into harsh and unmeasured and violent language, become, when controlled, an element of invaluable power. Rapture in worship, zeal in Christian work, ardour in friendship, enthusiastic loyalty to a just and righteous cause—these are all possible to men whose passions are impetuous. There is hardly any other sin which lies so near to great virtues. Let anger be mastered, and there is not only a great evil escaped, but the same force which wrought the former mischief gives inspiration and nobleness to the whole moral life.

¶ Rossetti's sonnet 'On Refusal of Aid between Nations,' written on some unremembered occasion, can never be obsolete while indignation and generosity remain to us. It expresses a deep sense of the Divine wrath, which comes, he says, not from the calamities of the time—

> But because man is parcelled out in men
> To-day: because for any wrongful blow
> No man not stricken asks, 'I would be told
> Why thou dost thus,' but his heart whispers then
> 'He is he, I am I.' By this we know
> That our earth falls asunder, being old.[1]

1. Righteous anger *is very sharply differentiated from unrighteous.* There is a well-known classification of sins which gives us the clue. We may distinguish sins against ourselves, sins which are wrought against our fellow-men, and sins which in a peculiar sense are an affront to the holy majesty of God. And we observe that the spirit and attitude of Jesus towards sin varied widely according as it bore one or other of those special characters. Wickedness which directed its rage and venom against Himself He met with meekness and clemency, and He enjoined His disciples in like manner to turn the other cheek to the smiter. 'When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.'

But Jesus felt very differently, and spoke very differently, in regard to those evil-doers whose sin took the special form of injustice and cruelty towards others, especially when the victims were helpless and defenceless folk. No fiercer invective was ever uttered than His denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees, whom He calls serpents, a generation of vipers; and the crowning charge of the indictment was that 'they devoured widows' houses.' Again, we are almost reminded of the fury with which the lioness protects her young when we read the words which Jesus hurled at those who should injure the little ones among the children of the Kingdom. 'Whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.'

So also with offences against God. His soul was stirred by sins of hypocrisy or profanity which had the distinctive character of an insult to the Divine Majesty. The sin of hypocrisy was to Him so loathsome that in the indictment of the Scribes he mentioned it along with the devouring of widows' houses. Every form of impiety that profaned the holy things of God—swearing lightly by His name, violation of the spirit of His holy day, corruption of His word by the traditions of men—was named as a sin which cried to Heaven with aggravated guilt. It is also memorable that the one occasion on which He used force was when His anger was stirred by the desecration of the Temple, and words seemed all too weak to mark His horror of the sordid traffic that had made the house of prayer into a den of thieves.

But at the same time, there is a further point to be taken into account. We must

[1] H. Newbolt, *A New Study of English Poetry*, 82.

remember that these expressions of the anger of Jesus were not hot and intemperate ebullitions of a temper that could not be controlled. They were no mere flashes of an indignation that had for the moment mastered Him. Nothing is clearer than that Jesus never for a moment lost that supreme control of Himself which is the wonder of the ages.

And, moreover, being without sin in Himself, He had a right to be angry at sin in others. Of ourselves it is those who are most angry at sin in themselves that may be angry at sin in the world.

> Thou to wax fierce
> In the cause of the Lord!
> Anger and zeal,
> And the joy of the brave,
> Who bade *thee* to feel,
> Sin's slave?

Let us hate sin in ourselves first, and then we may hate it in itself and in the world. Otherwise we cannot; for one of the worst results of the sin that we are full of is that it takes away our right to be indignant when other people sin, and so in time our standard of thought is lowered to their scale. To sin is to come short in love to God and man, and only he who loves much knows what it is to feel that anger which is ennobling and Godlike.

¶ Lincoln's biographer says that he was known among his fellows in his profession for a fire of anger that flashed out only in the presence of cruelty and wrong.[1]

2. Righteous anger *has a powerful effect for good.* There is a sentimental view of wrong-doing which calls tyranny a necessity of circumstances, uncharitableness a disease, and intolerance a mistake in judgment. It is not to be denied that injustice, intolerance, and want of charity are often the product of circumstances, of natural defect, of a hundred other things—and allowance, in judging of such wrong-doing, ought to be made for these things—but to say that it is not wrong-doing, but something else, and to count a man's own will and energy for nothing, and to excuse him from public condemnation because he happens to be feeble against bad advice, or to have strong opinions or passions—that is false, weak and detrimental to society.

When a gentle principle comes into peril, or a far-reaching duty confronts us, and we find that gentle words and ways are of no more use than a feather is against an elephant, then we have every right to be angry. Then we may summon all our forces to do battle with falsehood, wrong, cruelty, deeds evil or loathsome, and become each in our degree the synonym of an angry angel. We do not lose our temper then, we find it. Once and again in our lifetime, no matter what may be our calling, we shall see things done that are mean and base. Humanity is wronged past all bearing, justice and truth are insulted by their altars, purity is dragged down from its throne. Then our anger burns in us like a fire, and we strike out, and strike home. It is kept for these supreme uses, and must be. We must not get out our artillery to kill flies.

Beyond this, however, righteous anger has a further value. Apart from the smiting force it adds to our actual opposition to evil, righteous anger has a *teaching* power. If my friend quivers with indignation when he speaks of meanness, treachery, selfishness, I not only see that these things are evil, but I begin to abhor them. Half the social evil of our day is due to the fact that drunkenness and fornication or its suggestion are the matters not of our national anger but of our national jokes. Instead of thinking them disgusting and avoiding them, we regard them as trivialities, which, God knows, they are not. If we were *rightly* angry over them when we met them, the stink of our cities would not rise to heaven to-day.

¶ Had Luther's temper been as even and sweet as that of Erasmus, the world would still have waited for the trumpet-blast which ushered in the Reformation. No quality in Luther was of a greater worth in the work God gave him to do than this of waxing to a white passion, and then hurling the bolts of his mighty anger out of the fire. Or, had the

[1] Lord Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln*, 105.

old lion of England never roared and leapt in men like Cromwell and Fairfax, and lain within the onset of the Ironsides and the Great Parliament, then, for all we can see or say, the foot of the Stuarts might still have been on the nation's neck, and England—Heaven only knows where.[1]

3. Righteous anger *needs to be carefully safeguarded.* Notwithstanding its powerful effect for good, and the very real necessity for it, it is a weapon to be handled with the greatest of care, for if misused it becomes a danger to the user and indeed may very likely do harm to his cause as well.

Its dangers, indeed, are sufficiently obvious if one stops to think for a little. For instance, if we let it break down our self-control and carry us off our feet, however generous it is, it only does harm by making us and our cause appear ridiculous. Montaigne's advice might well be taken to heart by many people who are angry for very excellent and Christian reasons. 'People must never get vaguely angry; they must take care that reproof reaches the person of whom they complain; for usually they begin to shout at him before he hath come into their presence, and they go on shouting for an age after he hath left it.'[2] But it has more intimate dangers than this. Even a just anger may be nursed until it turns sour. 'Be ye angry, and sin not'—that is as if one said, Be angry, if you must, when due occasion arrives; but take heed that your anger be not sin, take heed that it become not sin. 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil': that is, cherish not wrath, let not wrath grow into hatred: yield not to the solicitations of the devil: give no place in your heart to him who is a liar and a deceiver and a murderer from the beginning. Far too readily we may throw over our personal sense of being wronged the clothing of right, calling revenge justice, and unforgivingness duty. It is only too easy for jealousy for God to merge into jealousy for self. As we begin by arguing for what we believe to be truth, and end by arguing for victory, so we begin by being angry with those who, we think, are enemies of the Kingdom of Heaven, and end in hating them because they are opponents of ourselves. The former is a righteous feeling, and one that purifies us and makes us nobler for having experienced it. The latter, though lying so near, and so like it in form, can only corrupt us, and leave us weaker.

To be effective, to be punitive, to be constructive, anger must be regulated by the moral understanding. It must be the servant, and not the master, of the moral will. It is our business to remember that, if we are to be like God in our indignation, we ought also to be like Him in our readiness to forgive. His forgiveness is unlimited, and there is no injury which man may do which man may not pardon.

¶ When, in Shakespeare's noble tragedy, Volumnia, the mother of Coriolanus, burning with indignation at the treatment her son has received at the hands of his countrymen, is bidden by Menenius Agrippa to come to his house and sup, she replies—

> Anger's my meat! I sup upon myself,
> And so shall starve with feeding.

Great are the sayings of great poets. When we sup upon ourselves, we 'starve with feeding.' Those strong passions which are aroused on God's side, bring purity, strength, nourishment to the soul. When on our side—*for self*, that is—they exhaust and starve us. They are husks in which is the semblance of food, but in which is no sustenance.[1]

> Lord, I would not be angry; the strong soul
> Thou gavest Man is so well-wrought a thing
> That I would fain not let it pass control,
> In wildest use to mar its radiant wing.

[1] R. Collyer, *The Joy of Youth*, 175.
[2] Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*, ii. 31: 'De la Colère.'

[1] A. Ainger, *Sermons preached in the Temple Church*, 177.

Yet would I keep my habitation fair,
Swept clean, and garnished, and in all things true,
Therefore I swing its casements to the air,
Letting thy winds of anger play me thro'.

Disdainful men that do not take a thought
Of where their feet are planted on distress,
Haply I would covet then the things they sought,
Losing my vision gazing on success.

Envy and malice poisoning all things fair,
Quelling the voices from thy heights of blue,
Shall I not swing my casements to the air,
Letting thy winds of anger play me thro'?[1]

Anger and Tenderness.

Eph. iv. 26.—'Be ye angry, and sin not.'
Eph. iv. 32.—'Be ye . . . tenderhearted, forgiving one another.'

ANGER and tender-heartedness, both in one person, both towards the same person—that is the Apostle's desire, that is his demand. And he was himself the example. For there *is* a tenderness—and it is very common—which is the antithesis of strength. There is no justice in it, no morality, no love of the good, no hatred of the bad. It is the overflowing of an easy nature that often works irreparable wrong, just because it has not strength enough to take a firm stand for what is right. Not such is the tender-heartedness of Paul. It knows the cleavage between light and darkness. It knows that it may be cruel to be kind, and that sometimes it may be kindest to seem cruel. But it also knows how lonely people are; how sad the heart may be for all the laughter; how heavily the burden of the cross may weigh, although the face is always brave and bright. 'Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted.' You can never tell what that other soul is bearing. The men and women you are inclined to envy—if you knew all, you might not envy them. And it is this—this instinct for the deeps, this surmise of what is hidden in the shadow—it is this that gives to tender-heartedness its power and its place in Christian brotherhood.

[1] D. Figgis.

¶ Can you find any heroic or saintly life into which the power of righteous anger did not enter? Or has there ever been a rescue of the good and true without the help of its driving force? Moses, indeed, suffered personal loss through the spilling of his anger, but without that anger his people would never have been saved. Everyone who has read the 'Life of Mr. Gladstone' knows that anger was one of his characteristics. On the occasion of a dispute with the Bank of England Sir George Lewis said: 'It is a pity Gladstone puts so much heat and irritability into business. Now, I am as cool as a fish.' On which Lord Morley remarks: 'The worst of being as cool as a fish is that you never get great things done, you effect no improvements, you carry no reforms against the lethargy or selfishness of men and the tyranny of old custom.'[1]

Paul learned it from his Master. He 'looked round upon them with anger, being grieved with the hardness of their heart.' He drove the traffickers out of the temple. It is the continual wonder about Jesus, that He was so strong and yet so tender-hearted. No authority could make Him quail; no array of power could ever daunt Him; and yet a bruised reed He would not break, and smoking flax He would not quench. He was not tender because He knew so little. He was tender because He knew so much. All that was hidden from duller eyes He saw—all that men had to bear and battle through. Their helplessness, their crying in the night, their inarticulate appeal to heaven—all this was ever audible to Jesus, and kept His heart as tender as a child's. And He never lost this tender-heartedness, even in the darkness of the Cross. Men scorned Him, and they spat on Him, and crucified Him, yet—'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'

¶ One of the grandest things I ever saw when wandering about a wild and mountain-

[1] A. N. Rowland.

ous country was a mighty rock of hard granite —granite that could smile at the thunderbolt, and stand stiff and unyielding before the most furious storm—and yet, from the heart of it, there flowed such a clear, cool fountain of the sweetest water![1]

There are several causes working in the world which make it a hard thing to keep the tender heart.

1. One of the commonest of all is *custom.* Do you remember, in the parable of the Sower, what happened to the seed by the wayside? It fell on the pathway that led across the field, and the birds of the air came and picked it up. It was not stony ground on which it fell; it was not foul with thistles and with thorns; it was good ground, but it was beaten hard by the passing of innumerable feet. Little children had gone that way to school; grave and reverend men had gone to synagogue. And the feet of happy lovers had been there, and the weary step of the ploughman going home; until at last, under that ceaseless traffic, the surface had become impenetrable, and the strip that might have been golden with harvest was just the happy hunting-ground of birds. Are we not all exposed to such a hardening with the constant traffic of our days? Ah, what open hearts we had when heaven lay about us in our infancy! But now, we are dulled down a little; we are less sensitive, less eager, less receptive; and one inevitable peril of all that is the peril of ceasing to be tender-hearted.

2. Another enemy of this same grace is *the fierce struggle* which many have, *to live.* Men say it is difficult to be true to-day; it is equally difficult to be tender. You could hardly expect a soldier on the field to be a perfect pattern of gentleness. At home he might be that—with his own children—scarcely amid the rigours of the war. And in that city-battle of to-day which we disguise with the name of competition, a man must be in deadly peril of losing the genius of the tender heart. In simpler communities it was not so. Life was easier, time was longer, men had larger leisure, and the sense of brotherhood was not quite lost. But in the city, with its stress and strain, with its pressure at every point, and with its crowd, life may have the joy of growing keen, but it has also the risk of growing cruel. It is not often that the successful man is the tender-hearted man. The battle has been too terrible for that: there has been too much crushing under foot; and always when a man tramples upon *others,* he tramples in that hour on his own heart.

3. But the greatest enemy of tender-heartedness is the old sad fact of *sin.* Sin is the mightiest anti-social power that ever alighted with curse upon the world. Sin blights all that is fairest in the character; sin coarsens everything that is most delicate; sin in the long run softens nothing; it hardens everything it touches. One would think from the popular novels of to-day that sin was something which transfigured life. Do not believe it; that is the most tragical of fallacies. Sin, at the heart of it, is always vile, deck it in any garments that you please. Sin leaves us narrower; impoverishes life; always ends in hardening of the heart.

¶ There is an old legend of the goblin horseman whose steed might be heard galloping at midnight. And the legend was that where the hoofs alighted the grass would nevermore be green again. I think that is a parable of sin, when a man gives it the rein within his heart; 'it hardens a' within, and petrifies the feeling.' Sin hardens a man's heart towards his wife. It hardens a man's heart towards his children. It hardens him to the touch of human need and to the call which the world makes upon his sympathy. And that is why the grace of tender-heartedness is so conspicuously a Christian virtue—because it betrays that conquest over sin which has been won for us in Jesus Christ.[1]

[1] J. Reid Howatt.

[1] G. H. Morrison, *The Return of the Angels,* 191ff.

Three Stages of Civilization.

Eph. iv. 28.—'Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need' (RV).

Dishonesty, industry, and generosity—these three words separate for us very accurately the clauses of this verse, and set before us three stages in civilization. The first stage is purely pagan—*stealing;* no proper sense of personal obligation, but living by filching the fruits of other men's labour. The second stage is partly pagan and partly Christian—*working;* not yet doing more than one's duty but at least doing that. The third stage is purely Christian—*giving;* the obligation at last recognized of doing more than the publicans, the joy of living like the Father which is in heaven.

1. *Stealing.*—Worse vices than theft were found in some of the churches, as in that great Church of Corinth, which was over the sea to the west, not far from Ephesus. Elsewhere we find that among the earliest Christians there was a grievous lack of charity and an abundance of pride. As regards the propensity to thieving, this was very common indeed in the Greek populations of that part of the world: and we must not be surprised if it tended to reappear within the Christian community of Ephesus.

We must take into account the habits and morality of the time. Many of the heathen moralists, and some of the Jewish Rabbis, justified theft, if some of the proceeds were devoted to benevolent purposes. Among the civilized nations of antiquity theft was thought dishonourable and worthy of punishment only if it was discovered. Now, some of the Christians to whom the Apostle sent this Epistle appear to have thought that they might continue the habit of stealing (whether by highway robbery or otherwise), satisfying their conscience by giving part of the proceeds of their theft to the poor. But Paul says to them, in effect, 'Not so; whatever may be the teaching of heathen moralists, and the practices of the day, you must, as the professed followers of Jesus Christ, abandon such practices entirely. 'Let him that stealeth (not, as in our Version, 'stole') 'steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.'

It is instructive to notice, in the text and the preceding verses, that the terms of admission to the Apostolic Church were very easy. Thieves, as well as liars and men and women of evil tempers, were freely admitted on professing their acceptance of the gospel. Now it matters not what a man may have been before he enters the Church, if he but repent and believe the gospel; but it matters a great deal what he is afterwards. For a professing Christian to be a thief, whether by open robbery (which is not very likely in this age) or by overcharging, or short measures, or adulteration in trade, or by fraudulent bankruptcy, or the extravagance which leads to bankruptcy, or any other of those more refined and circuitous forms of thieving (which are very likely in this age), is a scandal and a crying shame. 'Be not deceived; neither . . . thieves, nor covetous, . . . nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.'

¶ Probably the most singular funeral sermon ever heard was that which the eccentric Rowland Hill once delivered in London over the remains of his favourite servant, Roger. 'Many persons present,' remarked the preacher, looking around on the anxious faces turned towards him, as he stood perched up in his high pulpit, 'were acquainted with the deceased, and have had it in their power to observe his character and conduct. They can bear witness that for a considerable number of years he proved himself a perfectly honest, sober, industrious, and religious man, faithfully performing, so far as lay in his power, the duties of his station in life, and serving God with constancy and zeal. Yet this very man was once a robber on the highway.' You may readily imagine what astonishment these words produced, and amidst what profound silence the preacher thus went on: 'More than

thirty years ago he stopped me on the public road and demanded my money. Not at all intimidated, I argued with him; I asked him what could induce him to pursue so iniquitous and dangerous course of life. His answer was, "I have been a coachman; I am out of a place, and I cannot get a character; I am unable to find any employment, and am therefore obliged to do this or to starve." I told him where I lived, and asked him to call and see me. He promised he would, and he kept his word; I talked further with him, and offered to take him into my own service. He consented, and ever since that period he has served me faithfully—and not me only, but he has faithfully served his God. Instead of finishing his life in a public and ignominious manner, with a depraved and hardened heart, as he probably would have done, he died in peace, and, we trust, prepared for the society of just men made perfect. Till this day the extraordinary circumstance I have now related has been confined to his heart and mine. I have never mentioned it to my dearest friend.'[1]

2. *Working.*—On this duty St. Paul is very explicit. There is a great interest in looking at the first letters that he wrote, or at least the first that are preserved to us as part of Scripture. These are the letters to Thessalonica, a great mercantile city to the north of Ephesus and Corinth. There St. Paul preached and taught; and to that place, after he left it, he wrote two Epistles. It seems that idleness and restlessness, and what we call gossip, were prevalent in that city; and in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians he writes: 'We beseech you, brethren . . . that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing'; and in the Second Epistle he writes similarly: 'Even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.'

[1] J. N. Norton.

On this point we have not only St. Paul's words to guide us, but his example to attract us. We have distinct evidence that at these three places, Corinth, Thessalonica, and Ephesus, he himself worked with his own hands, though, as a preacher of the gospel, he had a right to be supported by those to whom he ministered; and this evidence comes to view very remarkably in three different ways. In connection with Corinth the information comes in the direct narrative of the Acts of the Apostles. There we are told that in Corinth he met Aquila and Priscilla, 'and because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.' In connection with Thessalonica the same fact is made apparent through a letter. St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: 'We behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.' In connection with Ephesus we are enabled to see this Apostle occupied in the same way through the speech which he addressed to the Ephesian elders summoned to meet him at Miletus: 'Ye yourselves know,' he says, 'that these hands'—'these hands'—holding them up as he spoke—'have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.' It is most interesting to see this habit of his life made manifest, very unexpectedly, from three different sources—from a narrative, from a letter, from a speech.

¶ Work is a divine education, part of God's discipline for the children of men. It may have begun as a curse; it is now a blessing, one of the greatest blessings we enjoy. Thank God for the daily work that has to be done, which helps to keep our hands honest and our souls clean, and preserves society as well as the individual from the corruption which inevit-

ably follows sloth and idleness. The lazy man is generally untruthful, improvident and unreliable. The sluggard and the idler are twins. The ranks of the criminal classes are recruited from the ranks of the idle. The hard and thorny path of labour leads to the Holy of Holies, for true work is true worship. The pre-Christian world believed in the dignity of idleness; Christianity has taught us the dignity of labour. Jesus of Nazareth was a common carpenter, and that fact has revolutionized our thoughts. He handled a plane, and from that moment we date the transfiguration of manual labour. Work became divine and holy.[1]

3. *Giving.*—Again let us refer to that speech to the Ephesian elders which was quoted above. To those elders, whom Paul himself had ordained at Ephesus, he says: In this working with my own hands I 'shewed you . . . how that so labouring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.' And now he writes, some four years afterwards, in a letter which would certainly be laid by those same elders, as many of them as survived, before the Christian community at Ephesus: Let a man be careful to maintain this habit of honest industry, in order 'that he may have to give to him that needeth.'

Here we rise to a higher sphere than before. Not simply honesty and industry, but large generosity should mark the Christian life. In fact, generosity is to furnish the impulse and continual motive for this honest industry. All men admit that honesty is incumbent upon us; and most men contend that industry is creditable and desirable. But, for the most part, in ordinary society, these virtues are placed on a very low ground. Men ought to be industrious, that they may maintain an honourable reputation, that they may save money, that they may have a secure balance in the bank, that they may increase the comfort of their households, that their children may make good marriages, that their family may rise in the world. Of course even Christian life has its prudential side. But it is not needful to say much on this subject in sermons. Christian thought ranges most freely through a region altogether different. According to the Christian standard we are to work that we may do more good: the highest aim of our labour is that we may help those who need our help; every one of our industrious days is to be viewed as, in some way or other, an opportunity of beneficence.

What an advantage it was to those members of the Church in Ephesus who had once been thieves, and who might still be tempted by those old thievish propensities, to have such a standard as this set before them! They were to be not only honest and industrious, but generous—they were to be industrious in order that they might be generous. Each Church of which we read in the New Testament has something, in some cases several things, characteristic of itself, and therefore pointedly instructive to us; and it is worth while to remember, when we are thinking of Ephesus, that it was in an address to the elders of that Church that St. Paul quoted that golden proverb of Christ, of which otherwise we should have known nothing: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

¶ 'I prayed the Lord to give me success,' said a rich man in his company in June, 1893. Paton seized the opening: 'And He has given it to you. What a debt you owe to Him! How do you intend to repay it?'[1]

[1] David Watson, *In Life's School*, 72.

The Labour Basis of Christianity.

Eph. iv. 28.—'Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.'

It is an astonishing thing that since the Reformation emancipated scholarship has not been able to discern that the religion of the New Testament has an economic basis, and that Jesus was always concerned with the

[1] *John Brown Paton*, 507.

economic expression of religion. It surely will not be long before the still prevalent idea that Christianity is indifferent to the order of society in which it flourishes, or that our Lord has nothing to teach on the questions of property, finance, taxation and wages, is recognized to be a complete and most blind misreading of the meaning of His Kingdom. It is apparently only under the exegesis of history that we can read our Gospels, for it is under the present strife of industrialism that the sayings of our Lord at last become intelligible and their profound reference can be measured. It is often supposed that the Apostle Paul was even more unconcerned with the order of society, yet here he is suddenly and unexpectedly illuminating. He enunciates the fundamental basis of honest labour as the basis of a true economic system.

1. There must be an abandonment of living by theft.

This is a curious exhortation to find embedded in a series of personal, ethical maxims. In amongst teaching against falsehood, anger and general quarrelsomeness, we have this sudden and surprising reference to stealing. We might suppose that there had been a large influx of thieves and robbers in the Church at Ephesus, or, since this Epistle was a circular letter to other Churches, suspect that the slave element, which formed so large a proportion of the early Church, needed specially to be warned against pilfering, concerning which servants generally are supposed to have an imperfect conscience. This is hardly an adequate explanation for singling out this offence; and if the whole of these moral exhortations be examined closely, it will be seen that they are little else than an elaboration of the second half of the Decalogue. There are warnings against breaches of the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth commandments; and we have here an example of the way in which the spirit embedded in those famous commands can be interpreted, showing that they are by no means the merely negative and restrictive laws that they are sometimes considered to be, but the very foundations of personal and social morality. Their hard and imperious ring melts away under the wise application and tender exposition which the Apostle here gives them.

We have here, then, simply a repetition of the eighth commandment: Thou shalt not steal. The command not to steal has the possibility of an alarming application if it is pressed to an ultimate economic analysis, and some such wider application must have been in the Apostle's mind. It is not mere pilfering, mere robbery of other people's goods, common felony or theft that he is here urging the converts to abandon. This may be seen from the thing with which it is contrasted: namely, the labouring with one's own hands; for there could not have been a large influx of converts from those who had actually been able to make a living by burglary or pocket-picking. The Apostle is exhorting men to leave any kind of life that does not really support itself by honest labour. The exhortation is highly disconcerting to those of us who live in the modern world, for which of us is able to assure himself that half his possessions are not stolen, that his salary is not taken from the labour of others? Instead of feeling sure that the Apostle's exhortation does not apply to us, it is very questionable whether modern society is not a vast system of legalized stealing; and he must be a clever and complacent person who can assure himself that he is in no danger of coming under the direct condemnation implied in this command. What is stealing? What is property? What is it right for a man to possess? These are questions which it is not easy to answer; and we have the uneasy feeling that the modern order dare not face them.

2. The alternative is direct, personal labour. Men must labour with their hands. This does not necessarily mean hand labour. There is a doubt about the true text, some versions reading 'with his *own* hands,' where obviously the emphasis is not upon hand labour, but upon a man living by his own instead of trying to live on other people's work. But it is more than likely that the Apostle had a lean-

ing towards hand labour as the more honourable and direct method of supporting oneself. He himself boasted that his own hands had ministered to his necessities. Although he claimed the right of an apostle to be supported by those to whom he ministered, yet there was an element of pride in him, a desire to retain his freedom and to be independent, which made him follow his trade of a tent-maker even when he was engaged in his apostolic mission and undertaking exhaustive journeys. He would also be prejudiced in favour of manual labour from the Jewish custom of teaching every boy a trade.

It has now come to be regarded as a mere question of æsthetics whether a man should work with his hands; those who hold that hand labour as distinct from brain labour, and hand labour as distinct from machine labour, ought to be done by all, at least in some proportion, are looked upon as cranks. There is no doubt much to be said for hand labour from considerations of health or art: but the question seems little related to the economic problems of our times. Machinery has come to stay, and the organization of the modern world demands a vast army of persons whose hand labour involves nothing more than that of driving a pen or tapping a typewriter. Nevertheless, it will always remain the case that ultimately all production depends upon labour and even all machinery upon hand labour. This is the basal thing, and cannot be neglected or left to unskilled and unthinking workers. We must at least see to it that hand labour is honoured, fairly remunerated, and has opportunity for mental training; not only to enable such workers to execute their labour with efficiency, but to employ their minds; for there is a great deal to be said for the combination of thought with hand labour, not only for the sake of the labour, but for the sake of thought. And we can excuse ourselves from this direct work only if we are certain that our work of brain is contributing to greater production, or is securing for the worker an honoured place in the scheme of things. There can be little doubt that our modern organized industrial system has tremendously increased production, but it has degraded the worker and it has not secured right distribution.

But the Apostle carries the matter even further: he commands men not only to work with their hands, but to work the thing that is good. A man is responsible for seeing not only that he produces, but that he produces something that is good; the word emphasizes the useful rather than the beautiful, but the distinction is not absolute: it must be beneficial to men. It is not enough that we have more production, we must see that it is the production of things that men need and that do them good. One of the unhealthy symptoms of industrialism is the great impetus it gives not only to useless and luxurious trades, but to many dangerous and degrading ones. It is difficult enough for many of us in the present system to secure that the work we do shall be at least harmless; but surely it ought to be a consideration, when a young person sets out to earn his living, to choose some trade or profession which is honourable, clean, and does minister directly to the welfare of mankind. The decision which is guided only by what will be the most profitable has disastrous social effects. Surely the question of a divine vocation ought to be faced just as much as when one feels called to the ministry or even to take up the teaching or medical professions. Ought not a man to consider whether he could not glorify God as a farmer, or a builder, or a clothier, better than in some calling too far removed from the production of necessaries? Something has gone wrong with modern society which it will take a terrible reformation to put right; but at least there are some trades which ought to be starved out for lack of applicants, and some which ought to be able to answer the call for greater productiveness, or we shall soon all be starving. It is frequently complained that the working classes are lazy. It is true; if they were not, they would scarcely be human. Man has to be tempted to work; only what should tempt him is not merely necessity, but the joy of creation. The modern worker is often shiftless and lazy because the system has destroyed

individual responsibility, pride in one's work, and the joy which can come only from work done willingly and freely performed. We need a different system badly, not only because at present the worker is often deprived of a just participation in the wealth he creates, but because it takes away his initiative and responsibility.

3. The object of real labour is declared by the Apostle to be the provision for those who have need. The end is not a subsistence necessity, but an overplus which may be devoted to charity. This is not a motive that will appeal to any section to-day. Charity is twice cursed in the modern system, because it is so often the reward of servility and the substitute for justice. But there is no system in the world which can ever be run on justice alone; it must always be motived by need, and that will always involve charity. There will always be those in the community who cannot have the direct reward of labour, because they are not capable of it; there are the children, the old people, and the weak and sickly. But even in addition to that no one of us will ever be able to tell whether he is really earning what he receives; every one of us lives more or less on the charity of others, on others working harder than they need do for themselves. Therefore the Apostle is profoundly right in making the motive of industry not immediately and directly one's own subsistence, but that surplus which will be needed for others.

Even if he meant almsgiving in the narrower sense, there will always be room and need for that. The charity of the poor to one another is always a wonderful and beautiful thing; there will always be room and need for surprising or shaming people by personal sacrifice, if the finest organization of industry is not to become a self-righteous and mechanical system. Let us rather rescue the word 'charity' from its false associations; it is the greatest word the Christian vocabulary has. If we speak of Divine charity we are reminded that it means more than right and more than reward, it means that overflowing of the Divine love which is spontaneous, uncreated, prodigal, and undiscriminating, and a love that is always costly. And it is a sound economic word, for, as a matter of fact, we all live on charity, and even the Marxian dictum, of making need, rather than reward, the basis of the economic system, makes it a basis of charity.[1]

Conversation.

Eph. iv. 29.—'Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear.'

Benjamin Kidd has imagined a visitor from another planet being set down in the midst of our modern Western civilization, and noting on every hand, as its most conspicuous feature, the manifest signs of the presence amongst us of great and enduring religious beliefs. If we may carry the supposition a step further and imagine our visitor admitted, like some invisible Ariel, to the intimacies of our home life, and able to overhear the conversation that goes on from day to day, by the fireside, at the dinner-table, and wherever friends and acquaintances come together in the life of social intercourse, we venture to think he would be not a little astonished at the regularity with which two facts would force themselves upon his attention: (1) the large liberty which we allow ourselves in the criticism and condemnation of the absent; and (2) the curious reserve and silence with which we fence round the whole subject of religion.

1. Now our chief interests are, and must be, with our fellow-men, and to bid us make our talk purely 'impersonal' is to bid us do violence to some of the deepest instincts of our nature. But our peril is this, that we so readily pass from speech about others that is pleasant and innocent and just to envy and innuendo, to slander, and miserable, death-dealing detraction. The fountain that should send forth only pure and sweet water gushes

[1] W. E. Orchard, *No More War*, 130ff.

out in bitter, brackish streams that poison all our life. Spurgeon used to say that if all men's sins were divided into two bundles, half of them would be sins of the tongue. And if anyone thinks that is a preacher's exaggeration, let him read what is written in the Book of Proverbs and the Psalms on the matter, and he will find that the preacher has good authority for his strong words. The sins of the tongue, who can number them? The mischief of the tale-bearer, who can measure it?

When St. Paul commands aged women that they be 'not slanderers,' the word he uses means, literally, 'devils'; it is the word which has given us our adjective 'diabolical'; and verily there is no temper that is so wholly un-Christian and anti-Christian, that so well deserves the ugly name of 'devilish,' as the temper of the slanderer and the back-biter. The Apostle James is, if possible, more emphatic still: 'If any man thinketh himself to be religious,' he says, 'while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain.' But on the other hand, 'if any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also.'

It is said that St. Augustine had engraved upon his table these words: 'There is no place at this table for any one who loves scandal.' Shall not we make a like resolve, to speak no slander—no, nor listen to it? For, if for every *idle* word that men shall speak they shall give account in the day of judgment, where shall the slanderer and the back-biter appear?

We do not forget the reserve so characteristic of us as a nation in all things that belong to the life of the spirit; we do not forget that the very strength of our emotions may sometimes choke their utterance, and that to some the attempt to translate into fluent and facile speech the experiences of religion seems a coarsening and vulgarizing of life's most holy things. And yet, when the fullest allowance has been made for all this, does it not remain true that we are silent and reserved about religion beyond what is right? Is it not our duty to cultivate the freer and fuller expression of the feelings that lie nearest to our hearts? And is it not to be feared that the simplest explanation of our silence is very often the truest—we speak of our religion so little because there is so little of which to speak? Surely if Christ were to us what He ought to be, if He held the place in our lives that is His by right, we should—far more often than we do—break through the crust of our reserve, and tell to others the things which we have seen and felt.[1]

2. An old writer of the eighteenth century[2] says: 'Let us endeavour to make religious conversation, which is in all respects desirable, in some degree fashionable.' 'I can hardly,' he continues, 'name a polite family where the conversation ever turns on the things of God. I hear much frothy chit-chat, but not a word of Christ. And I am determined not to visit those companies where there is not room for my Master as well as for myself.[2]

Grieving the Spirit.

Eph. iv. 30.—'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.'

THERE are few nobler expositions of Christian ethics in the New Testament or out of it than this great passage of Ephesians, in which the recipients of the letter are bid to put away 'the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit,' and to 'put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.' Like the breath of sea or mountain air after the thick atmosphere of crowded cities, like the pleasant vigour of physical health after a period of hot and restless fever, like the sweet morning sunshine out of doors after a night spent in heated rooms amid noisy revelry and dissipation, is the rising of the mind out of the old, worldly, deceitful life into the fresh and wholesome mind of such a life as the apostolic writer sums up in that pregnant phrase of

[1] G. Jackson, *Memoranda Paulina*, 24ff.
[2] James Hervey.

his, 'the new man.' Truthful, honest, self-controlled, clean in speech, kindly, tender-hearted, forgiving—such is this 'new man' whom he would have each reader of his pastoral straightway set himself to be. And in the midst of his persuasive pleading he interjects as warning against the evil mood which he would have men put aside, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.'

There are three ways in which we may grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

1. *By resisting Him when He seeks to lead us to Christ.*—After Christ died as the Sacrifice for sin, and had wrought out the great scheme of grace, He left it to the Holy Spirit to apply it to the souls of men. It is the Holy Spirit who convinces us of our sin and misery. It is He who enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ—shows us that Christ can save us from all that. It is the Blessed Spirit who gives us the will to go to Christ: who persuades and enables us to embrace Him as He is offered in the gospel. And having begun the better life in us, in our sanctification He makes it grow up to perfection. In short, penitence, faith, holiness, every virtue and grace—all are the result of the operation of the Holy Spirit. We may truly say, indeed, that it is the work of the Holy Ghost to apply to our souls the atonement wrought out by Christ's life and death, and the several benefits of it. And the chief and worst way of grieving Him is to refuse to let Him do for us the great thing He is here to do. If we continue in sin, if we hold away from the Redeemer, we cast back the offered gifts of the Spirit in His face: we reject His teaching, we refuse His help, we bid Him cease to press on us His unwelcome offices, and leave us to ourselves. This is the great, all-comprehending way of vexing the Holy Spirit: *this* includes all possible ways of grieving him: *this*, fully carried out, is to quench the Spirit, and to commit the one unpardonable sin!

And art thou grievèd, sweet and sacred Dove,
When I am sowre,
And crosse thy love?
Grievèd for me? the God of strength and power
Griev'd for a worm, which when I tread,
I passe away and leave it dead?[1]

2. *By refusing to allow Him to comfort us in sorrow.*—When one sees the depressed, anxious way in which many Christians live, one would hardly believe that there is a Being—not an angel, not an arch-angel, but God Himself—whose office and work it is to comfort Christian people; to prevent them from being sad or depressed or anxious! *That* is the very work of the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost; and surely He is strong enough for His work, if we would only let Him do it. When we go about depressed and fearful and foreboding we are dishonouring the Holy Ghost in His character of Comforter. For He comes and offers us comfort; and we, as it were, push the kind hand away! If we would but let Him, if we would but open our hearts to Him, there is no trouble or loss we know that would not be soothed into peace by His strong consolation.

If we were sitting by the fireside despondent and beaten; and if some friend very near and kind came to us, and laid a gentle hand upon our shoulder—and if, when our friend began to speak words of comfort to us, we cut him short by saying, 'No: I don't believe you care for me; I don't believe you can help me';—is there anything that would so grieve such an one's kind heart? And yet, that is just what we practically say to the Blessed Comforter, if we plod along our path of care and trouble and worry, keeping it all to ourselves, and never asking Him to cheer us. He is there to do it: He is able to do it: He is willing to do it. Let us not grieve Him by refusing to let Him soothe our grief!

¶ The love of Jesus is the favourite theme of Christian hearts: they never weary, they ought never to weary, of recounting it. Yet is there another love—I will not say nearer yet or more indefatigable, for it is untrue, it is wrong, thus to create differences where there

[1] George Herbert, *The Temple.*

are none, or to destroy the Unity in exaggerating the Trinity—still there is a love, St. Paul expressly calls it *the love of the Spirit*, which seems to come, if it were possible, yet nearer to us than the other, inasmuch as it is that which actually abides not only with but within us; actually bears the brunt, so to say, of our provocations and backslidings and unaccountable waywardnesses; actually feels, at their source and spring, the hateful ingratitude and malice and impurity and impiety of these cloked and veiled hearts, and suffers, with an intensity proper to Deity, the abominable sinfulness of the sinful. It is this thought to which St. Paul appeals when he bids us not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed unto a day of redemption.[1]

3. *By restraining prayer or by heartless prayers.*—It is part of the gracious work of that blessed One to help us to pray: to warm our hearts with child-like and trustful devotion: to bring suitably to our remembrance the things for which we ought to pray. What Christian is there but will, in the deepest humility but without a shade of hesitation, testify that he has felt, in his warmed and elevated and comforted heart, the fulfilment of the words of promise,—the 'Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.' Now, if we pray little, and seldom, and heartlessly, and with wandering thoughts, and not feeling really to whom we are speaking, and not really thinking what a strong thing prayer is, and what an unspeakable privilege, can there be any doubt that we are grieving that Blessed Spirit who remembers all that prayer is when we forget it; and who, when He sees a human being pray, does (as it were) graciously draw near, and whisper to the heart, 'Now I am here, I am here to help you, if you will only let Me do it; and if you desire really to pray'?

¶ Nathaniel Hawthorne had a little daughter called Una, who often made up stories for her younger brother. One day she was overheard telling him of a boy who was very naughty. 'He grew naughtier and naughtier,' said the child, 'and every day naughtier still, until at last—at last—he struck God!' That was terrible! But there are many, many people who do strike God not once only, but again and again. The Holy Spirit is God. 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.'[1]

[1] C. J. Vaughan, *The Presence of God in His Temple*, 244.

Sealing.

Eph. iv. 30.—'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.'

What is the significance of this sealing in the Holy Spirit. The pertinence of the figure appears to be this: When the Holy Spirit is given entrance into the soul He stamps the soul with a seal which denotes a certain relationship between the life and God. The very presence and pressure of the Spirit lays certain characteristics on the soul. It is sealed unto the day of redemption! Now, even in our own day, the seal retains the significance it had in olden times.

1. Sealing marks a thing as somebody's *peculiar possession.* It denominates property. The affixing of a seal to a book, to a bag, to a document, marks off the particular thing as somebody's private possession. And when the Holy Spirit is given unto us we are distinguished as God's own. 'He hath sealed us for his own.'

¶ I looked up from my paper and saw a little etching upon the study wall. In one corner of the etching was the engraver's name. The name was written boldly, almost obtrusively, loudly signifying that the engraver was not ashamed of his work. If the work had been poor and scamped, and evidencing no merit or worth, he would have hidden his name or omitted it altogether. The affixing of the name witnessed to a certain pride in the possession. And our God 'seals

[1] J. R. Miller, *Our New Edens*, 143.

us for His own.' He 'writes His name on our foreheads.' He is not ashamed to characterize us as His own possession, and permits us to move about distinguished as the personal belongings of our God.[1]

2. But if the seal is significant of property, it is also suggestive of *treasure*. We do not seal the unimportant letter. The affixing of a seal distinguishes the valuable. When the Holy Spirit seals the soul it testifies that we are of infinite value to God. Everybody counts! We are precious in the sight of our Lord.

¶ A country minister told me the other day of an untutored countryman who dwells in the Yorkshire dales; I mean untutored by the schools, but grandly trained and finished of the Spirit. He is a man of deeply spiritual nature, and enjoys most intimate communion with His Lord. His prayers are quaint and unconventional, and he speaks with delightful and yet reverent familiarity to his God. A little while ago, in one of his public prayers, he communed in this wise: 'Lord, I must be worth something! There must be some hidden treasure within me! Burglars never visit empty houses, and the devil is always visiting me!' The reasoning was perfectly sound, and based upon New Testament teaching. Much sought implies much treasure. When the burglar is about there is something to be gained. When the Evil One sees the Lord's seal, he beholds a treasure he longs to loot.[2]

3. But the significance is wider still. The seal not only suggests property of a valuable type, but it testifies to *special defence and security*. When we travel about the country there is nothing to distinguish our luggage from the common pile. It is labelled, but it receives no special protection. But we notice spacious hampers upon which prominent seals are affixed, and to these are given extraordinary care. They are vigilantly guarded when they are placed in the locker, and careful hands await them when they reach their destination. And when we are sealed by the Holy Spirit we are set apart for peculiar defence. 'The Lord is thy keeper'; 'He that keepeth thee will not slumber or sleep.' And all this defence is assured unto us, not for a day or for a year, but 'unto the *day of redemption!*' When Paul uses the word 'redemption,' he uses it in a spacious and most inclusive sense. It is not merely the initial salvation when we are delivered from the bondage of darkness. It includes the ultimate salvation when we enter the land of glory and when the last vestige of sin and sorrow is left behind.

4. But is this a motive to *holiness?* Men say that security acts rather as a motive to carelessness. Well, we observe at least that the Apostle does not think so, but uses it rather as a motive to holiness. Because we have been sealed by the Spirit of God, he reasons, let us not grieve Him by sin. Men may think that a stronger appeal might be based on fear lest we fall from the Spirit's keeping; as if Paul should rather have said, Because you can be kept only by the Spirit, beware lest you grieve Him away by sinning. But Paul's actual appeal is not to fear but to gratitude. Because you have been sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption, see to it that you do not grieve, bring pain or sorrow to, this Spirit who has done so much for you.

¶ 'Give a dog a bad name,' says the proverb, 'and hang him.' And the proverb may be an allegory to us. Deal with people on a low plane and they may sink to that plane and become incapable of occupying any other. Cry to them, 'Lift up your hearts,' and believe me you will obtain your response. It is a familiar experience that if you treat a man as a gentleman he will tend to act like a gentleman; if you treat him like a thief, only the grace of God and strong moral fibre can hold him back from stealing. Treat Christian men like Christian men; expect them to live on Christian principles; and they will strive to walk worthily of their Christian profession.[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett.
[2] Ibid.

[1] B. B. Warfield, *Faith and Life*, 294.

Bitterness.

Eph. iv. 31.—'Let all bitterness . . . be put away from you.'

The Apostle is writing to Christians. And as Christians we must get rid of bitterness. For it is hardly too much to say that men believe in us as Christians *only so long as they believe that we are kind:* only so long as they do not know that we are bitter, and retaliative, and alert to take offence, and cruel in misjudgment. When the veil is lifted and they know the facts, they have finished with us, and our profession of religion is but the minister of bitterness in them. Kindness is a beautiful thing in any man: it is an imperative necessity in a Christian.

'Beware,' said the Apostle, 'lest a root of bitterness springing up trouble you and *thereby many be defiled.*' What a true touch that is! Have we not seen this unholy infection at work: happy companionships turned into knots of malice, groups even of Christ's servants becoming nests and hotbeds of unholiest resentment, their mutual smiles veiling a deep mistrust, and confidence and freedom utterly destroyed by the sordid necessity of maintaining a perpetual watchfulness lest by a word the one should exasperate the explosive self-love of the other? Have we not chafed against this thing and then most earnestly cried out to be delivered when our own fall into bitterness had most its origin in disappointment with ourselves?

Viscount Morley reminds us in his *Cromwell* that a man's opinions are linked together by many invisible strands. Bitterness takes advantage of that unity in our nature, and taking possession of only a segment of man's thought at first will spread itself over every opinion and sympathy he possesses. Especially is this the case when the first access of bitterness comes through a great disappointment with men. I well remember when the blow came to me; when, the glow and glamour of my ordination past, I had settled down to acquiring some knowledge of my people, and had been stunned by the appalling realities regarding the men and women in the ranks of professing Christians in the village where my ministry lay. I cannot forget the desolating dreariness of my disillusionment; and how my bitter disgust found expression in acidulated speech, and in crude sarcasms which a maturer experience would fain not have unspoken. 'Is there not a cause?' I said to myself at the time; 'do I not do well to be angry?' For my blood boiled at the systematic dishonour done to Christ, the desecration of His sacraments and the riot of inconsistency in the profession of His Name. But the lurking enemy of bitterness recked nothing of the occasion he could use to issue forth, whether it were just or not; the point is the bitterness tended to invade segment after segment of my thought; it began in my hasty judgment of a few villagers. In a month or two I found it in my theology and my interpretation of the Christian ethic, and its tendency was ever vigorously to spread farther afield.

1. What is to be done? Surely the first thing to do is to be clear that effort is necessary and worth while. Necessary, else we should not have the strenuous and urgent exhortations on this matter in the New Testament: '*Pursue* peace with all men'; 'looking out *diligently*'; '*straining* to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.' That is the way the New Testament speaks of this matter. It is assumed that there is a difficult work to be done. And that effort is worth while is shown most clearly by the fact that the prevalence of this thing in Christian communities depends largely on the training of opinion regarding it. In some Christian communities its essential opposition to the spirit of Christ does not seem to have been realized; there it is rampant and flagrant; in others it is counted a shame and a disgrace. Surely the producing of that feeling of shame —or as we should say the educating of the public opinion—is the very motive of the third chapter of the Epistle of James, with the wistful simplicity revealing the saddened heart of

the Apostle: 'My brethren, these things ought not so to be.'

2. In what direction are we to make our effort? We begin at the outmost edge of interior reforms when we speak of cultivating repression of *speech*. Yet we must do that, and do it seriously, with some serious apprehension of the fruitfulness of speech in good or evil, and of its terrible reflex action on the mind of the speaker. If a man habitually utters low and unjust judgments of others, he will himself sink to the level of his judgments; and we may have seen collapses of this sort ourselves.

(1) And specifically, we must declare war against the type of clever speech that hurts. 'We may put down,' says Father Faber, clever speeches as the first and greatest difficulty in the way of kindness.' Nothing will avail to cure us of a bitter spirit unless we be made ashamed of the cheap *banalité* of cutting speeches and of shabby misinterpretations clothed in funny words. The daintiness of the apothegm does not strip the act of its vulgarity. Assassination is the same brutal thing, whether the weapon be a bludgeon or a stilletto. We must learn that *it is mean to hurt*.

(2) But we must go deeper still. Release from bitterness is largely a matter of width of sympathetic outlook and of pre-occupation in great causes. Paul's exhortations against bitterness are never far removed from his reminders to his people of the great sweep of the action of redemption, of the vast circumference of the Kingdom of God. Bitterness and narrowness of view, or at least narrowness of interest, always go together. If the church were missionary (let it be said for the thousandth time), her intractable divisions at home would be manageable, aye, would disappear.

3. And lastly, and chief of all, the effort to crush bitterness must be carried to the region of prayer, of faith, or religious communion if any progress is to be made. When I see a Christian man fall into bitterness, especially when I am myself that man, I know that it is due to a want of *freshness in devotion*, to falling behind in the exercise of personal religion. In Heb. xii. 15 this is the very expression used: 'Lest any man fall short of,' *i.e.*, fall behind, 'the grace of God.' When does a man fall behind the grace of God? When he is living not on the devotion of to-day, but on the emotions of yesterday; not on to-day's spiritual sustenance but on the mildewed manna of yesterday. There is an air of out-of-dateness, a hint of atrophy or rusting of religious faculty, about the Christian whose affections are narrowing in, whose kindly charitableness is wrinkling up into mean suspicions, and who has come out of the sunshine of love into the chilling fogs of cynicism.

Your spirit and mine cannot be kept sweet for a day, not for a day, without direct contact with the spirit of Jesus. Do not tell me that that renowned Christian of the lancet-tongue and brilliant sarcasms is living a life of prayer. It is impossible. He could not be laying himself open to Christ's rebuke, and yet persist in the diabolic spirit of the traducer and the slanderer.

Within thy tabernacle, Lord
Who shall abide with Thee?
And in thy high and holy hill
Who shall a dweller be?
Who doth not slander with his tongue
Nor to his friend doth hurt:
Nor yet against his neighbour doth
Take up an ill report.

Yes, the kindness that beams from our faces on our brethren is the best evidence that we have been on the mount with God.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in Heaven:
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And our judgment will take after the kindness of heaven's judgment, if we are often in humble self-prostration on the Mount of Communion, and suffer to blow about us the refreshing wind of the Spirit of God.[1]

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KINDNESS.

Eph. iv. 32.—'Be ye kind one to another.'
2 Cor. vi. 6.—'By kindness.'

Kindness is a virtue which we are at little pains to cultivate. How often have we heard a sermon on kindness? Societies of all kinds have been formed to prevent various forms of evil and to promote human welfare. There is a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals. We need to remember that a society has been formed to prevent cruelty to our fellow-men. The society was called into being by our Blessed Lord, and it is named the Church of Christ. A primary law of this Society is that its members should be habitually kind in word, in deed, and in thought to their fellow-men.

¶ 'Kindness,' says Faber, in one of his Conferences, 'is a great part of spiritual life; it is a peculiar participation in the Spirit of Jesus; it reconciles worldly people to religious people. And really, however contemptible worldly people are in themselves, they have souls to be saved, and it were much to be wished that religious people would make their devotion less angular. Devout people are probably, as a class, the least kindly of all classes. This is a scandalous thing to say; but the scandal of the fact is much more serious than our acknowledging the fact. Religious people are, I fear, an unkindly lot.'

I.

THE WORD.

1. *The Greek word.*—What is the Greek word which St. Paul uses? What did it mean to those who first heard him so use it, and how has it been translated? The word he uses is *chrestos.* It is easy to remember this Greek word, for it is so much like that other Greek word, *Christos.* The adjective *chrestos* was so pre-eminently identified with the life of the Christian that it is not to be wondered at that the Greeks confused the two words, and sometimes wrote for *Christiani, Chrestiani;* and the common tribute, 'See how these *Christiani* are *chrestoi,*' or, 'See how these Christians love one another,' was the opposite of Faber's biting sentence: 'Religious people are an unkindly lot.'

2. *The use of the word.*—It was not in prominent use in classical Greek. It first meant 'serviceable'; then 'simple.' But just as Christ sanctified the word 'simplicity,' so He sanctified the word *chrestos.* He said, 'My yoke is *chrestos.*' He bade us be kind one toward another, as the Father in heaven is *chrestos* to the unthankful, and to the thankful. He said that the old wine is *chrestos*—*i.e.,* soft and mellow to the palate. St. Paul, learning his Master's speech, told us that the *chrestotes,* or the kindness, the benignity of God (Rom. ii. 4) leads us to repentance. He would have us know that this kindness has an edge to it, is not mere good nature; for he speaks of the goodness and severity of God.

3. *The English word.*—'Let us consider the word "kind," ' writes Archbishop Trench. 'We speak of kind persons, and we speak of mankind; but we seem to be using different words. But they are connected by the closest bond; a kind person is a kinned person, one *of kin,* one who acknowledges and acts on kinship, confesses that he owes to them as of one blood with himself the debt of love. And so mankind is men-kinned. In this word is contained the declaration of the relationship which exists between all the members of the human family. But if our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, guided by natural religion, perceived signs of this truth, it is for us the very essence of revealed religion. For us the Word was made flesh. Christ is incarnate humanity; in Christ all men are of kin.' So Archbishop Trench; and Dr. Westcott speaks similarly:

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Kindness is one of the strongest of the forces that are working to bring about God's Kingdom on earth. In the first place, the service of man is the service of God. Each solitary kind action that is done, the whole world over, is working briskly in its own sphere to restore the balance between right and wrong. The more kindness there is on the earth at any given moment the greater is the tendency of the balance between right and wrong to correct itself and remain in equilibrium. Nay, this is short of the truth. Kindness allies itself with right to invade the wrong and beat it off the earth. Justice is necessarily an aggressive virtue, and kindness is the amiability of justice.

But kindness also works more directly still. Our kindness to other people may not perhaps be able to do much good (though we may remember what Christ said about a cup of water), but it is never without effect on ourselves. Kindness, for one thing, has a direct relation to beauty, certainly a much more intimate relation than various artifices and blandishments bought and applied with diligence by some misguided people with the purpose of attaining beauty—from the outside. If we would be truly beautiful, we must be kind. True beauty of soul and comeliness of face come through unselfish living. Again, when we find ourselves, as all of us sometimes do, overpowered as it were by melancholy, the best way is to go out, and do something kind to somebody or other. And kindness is one of the qualities that give us balanced humanity—that keep us from becoming one-sided and distorted in our growth. It was a main source of the power of such men as Luther and George Fox, for it was the union of a broad humanity and common-sense and warm social affections with the extraordinary intensity of his convictions that saved Luther from the extravagances of fanaticism.

Now, considering these points, surely we cannot say that this subject of kindness is an unimportant one. It is in reality a great part of the spiritual life. It is found in all its regions, and in all of them with different functions, and in none of them playing an inferior part. It is a peculiar participation of the spirit of Jesus, which is itself the life of all holiness. Jesus alone has made love to God the climax of self-expression, and love to men like unto it. Peter built an addition table of the Christian graces. He began with faith and ended with charity. Paul condensed the permanent qualities to three, and again the climax is charity. In Peter's thought brotherly kindness is higher than godliness and the last grace to be attained. We may even be heavenly-minded and fail in brotherly kindness. We may be charitable, yet not kind; merciful, yet not kind; self-denying, yet not kind. If Christians would add a little common kindness to their uncommon graces, they would convert ten where they now only abate the prejudices of one.

¶ R. K. Remington was very kind to Moody when the latter was in New York. When they parted at the train Moody grasped his hand and said:

'If you ever come to Chicago, call on me; and I will try to return your kindness.'

Said Mr. Remington, 'Don't wait for me; do it to the first man that comes along.'[1]

¶ I have seen almost all the beautiful things God has made; I have enjoyed almost every pleasure that He has planned for man; and yet as I look back I see standing out above all the life that has gone four or five short experiences when the love of God reflected itself in some poor imitation, some small act of love of mine, and these seem to be the things which alone of all one's life abide. Everything else in all our lives is transitory. Every other good is visionary. But the acts of love which no man knows about, or can ever know about—they never fail.[2]

¶ When I look back at my experience of thus being confronted with death, and ask myself what, in that dark hour, were the memories that I treasured, I have little difficulty in answering. I cared not at all for my personal successes; not at all about the little position I had achieved; not at all about

[1] *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (by his son), 135.
[2] Henry Drummond.

having laboured steadily and conscientiously—all these things seemed unreal and immaterial. I did not even care to think that I had, however fitfully and feebly, tried to serve the will of God, tried to discern it, tried to follow it. In that hour was revealed to me that I could not have done otherwise, that all my life, success and failure alike, had been but a minute expression of that supreme will and thought. What I did care about was the thought that I had made a few happier, that I had done a few kindnesses, that I had won some love. I was glad that there had been occasions when I had conquered natural irritability and selfish anxiety, had said a kind and affectionate thing. Rectitude and prudence, they seemed to matter nothing; what oppressed me was the thought that I might have been readier to do little deeds of affection, to have been more unselfish, more considerate.[1]

The blessings of blessings for him
That has always time to be kind,
A blessing running before,
A blessing trottin' behind;
An angel caring his house
To drive away every sorrow;
Good luck at his heels to-day,
Good luck on his path to-morrow.
A place for him up in Heav'n,
And St. Peter there at the gate
With the kindly welcome word
And himself not bid to wait:
For I'm thinking the saint will say,
'Come in here out of the wind,
It's not so often I see
A man that has time to be kind.[2]

Pardon.

Eph. iv. 32.—'Forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you' (RV).

THERE are three steps in the Divine pardon; there are three also in the fullest human forgiveness.

1. The first of these is the manifestation of a true passion for friendship that will never be satisfied till we have done our best to turn each enemy into a friend. Surely the passion of hatred has had its long, long day in the world! Men have found that there is a certain brutal joy in revenge, and in anger, and in all uncharitableness, and they have drunk this bitter-sweet cup of vengeance to the dregs. Is it not time that the passion of love should begin its day—that men should taste the sublimest joy that even God can experience—'the joy of an aggressive spirit of forgiveness'? To heal the wounds of friendship, bind up the spirit of the broken-hearted, and transform hatred and indifference into attachment and love, is not this Christianity—is not this Christ? And are not we who call ourselves by His blessed name recreant followers when we fail to follow here Him whose love was so great that ingratitude, death, and the grave could not quench it?

2. But is there not a second step to be taken in the gentle art of forgiveness? Does it not imply that when others injure us, and use us ungratefully, we should see their sin as they ought to see it, and repent in their name and for them? This is the Christ-spirit if it is anything. What does the passion and mystery of the Cross mean, among other things, but this—that Christ took our sins upon His pure heart, repenting of them in the name of the race whose nature He had taken upon Him, and offering to God this pure and perfect repentance on our behalf?

We cannot enter into the full meaning of the Cross, but we surely cannot but see that over the soul of the crucified Son of Man the sense of the world's sin swept like a wave of midnight darkness, and that it almost overwhelmed Him as He offered Himself to its fierce tides of agony and loneliness. And we must see, too, that God in His forgiveness shares this Divine sorrow for sin. It means that He sorrowed over us, repented for us and in us through His Son, and so stamped for ever on the face of sin its infinite ingratitude and blackness and shame. But for this

[1] A. C. Benson.
[2] W. M. Letts, *Songs from Leinster*, 110.

there could have been no atonement, no reconciliation; it is only when we see God, as it were, weeping for and over our iniquities as if they were His own, that we see sin as it is, and so can adequately repent of it and hate it. 'As God also in Christ forgave you!'

And that is to be our spirit also toward one another. We are to feel the shame of others' sin as well as our own; we are to sorrow over the evil that they have done to us, not only because we have suffered from it, but because they have done it. We cannot forgive that evil as God forgives ours till we have thus grieved over it, almost as though it were our own.

¶ It is when one has felt the *shame* of another's sin upon one's own soul that one can forgive.[1]

3. And then, finally, there is the act of pursuing grace, the bringing of all the loving energies of the spirit to bear on the sinner, that he may be brought to see and share in this attitude towards his sin, not with a view of triumphing over him in self-righteousness, but that he may himself be reconciled in the true spirit of repentance in an atmosphere of love. Here we enter the inner sanctuary of the Divine love and pity, which in a sorrow that has joy at its heart wins back the soul into the restored, nay, the glorified relation of friendship—a relation which is never quite complete in its experiences till it has both received and bestowed forgiveness.

So we climb the last height from which we see into the profoundest depths of this great Christian act of forgiving love, and enter into partnership with the forgiving God, and with the atoning Christ, and with the Spirit that doth ever make intercession for us.

¶ If we are to understand this matter accurately, as it stands in the New Testament, we need to observe that two very distinct and, in some respects, dissimilar Greek words are employed here, to denote the virtue under consideration; both of which are translated by the single, very beautiful, but strangely dishonoured, English word 'forgiveness.' One signifies merely a letting go, a release of charges, an exemption from punishment, the merely negative good of not being held in condemnation; a word accurately translated here and there by the word 'remission.' The other signifies the very positive and operative matter of sacrifice and suffering to gain the heart of an adversary; that which not merely lets go, but prepares men to be let go. Literally this word means 'to bestow grace.' Thus in the text, where it is translated 'forgive,' we may read—'Dealing grace one towards another, even as God for Christ's sake hath dealt grace towards you.' There is also this remarkable contrast between the two words, translating both by forgiveness, that one fixes on the very last point, or final effect of forgiveness—viz., the release, the letting go of charges, the absolution which says, 'Go in peace'; and the other finds its main idea in the first things of forgiveness, the love, the going after, the giving-for, by which the soul is taken hold of sooner than it asks to be; that which did not wait for penitence to come, that it might let penitence go, but which undertook to bring on penitence, prepare it, melt the heart into it, and so to execute the letting go of the soul, by making the sins let go of it.[1]

[1] W. E. Orchard.

Forgiveness Divine and Human.

Eph. iv. 32.—'Forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you' (RV).

God forgives, but only on condition that we forgive. Has it ever struck you that this is the only human act that we are permitted to take into God's holy presence, and plead as a reason why He should do to us as we do to one another? There is a grand audacity in this clause of our Lord's prayer, in which He takes for granted that, whether in God or man, forgiveness is the same thing. God's forgiveness is only man's on the grand scale; man's is God's in miniature.

[1] H. Bushnell, *Christ and His Salvation*, 335.

1. If we were asked to distil the essence of the Christian Faith into a word we should undoubtedly use the term 'holy love' to represent it; and if, further, we were asked to name the most representative act or fact or virtue of the Christian Faith, that act and fact and virtue would be love in the act of forgiveness. For, God and man and the world being what they are, love is simply forgiveness at the root, and forgiveness is love in the fruit. The mystery and glory of our Faith are in the words 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' The Cross is God's forgiveness in operation. The ministry of the gospel is the ministry of reconciliation.

Forgiveness is the crest of the wave of God's love; there it breaks into redemption. It is the key to the inner mystery of love; it is the condition of salvation; it is the seed of eternal life.

2. The Christian life is the forgiven and the forgiving life, accepting from God what we pass on to others, freely receiving, freely also giving. What men most need from God is forgiveness, and what they most need from each other is also forgiveness. For sin means the outrage of friendly relations, and forgiveness is the renewing of friendly relations on a basis of love and righteousness. God is most like Himself in the attitude of free pardon. Man rises so as to be most like God in the same Divine act: he 'loves most who has been most forgiven,' and he shows love best, in its finest aroma and sweetness, who is most willing to forgive.

O man, forgive thy mortal foe,
Nor ever strike him blow for blow,
For all the saints on earth that live
To be forgiven must forgive.
Forgive him seventy times and seven,
For all the saints that are in heaven
Are both forgivers and forgiven.

3. God forgives and man forgives. But, now the point is that God forgives *as* man forgives.

(1) 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us!' Do we realize the grandeur of our claim, when, having forgiven some injury, some spiteful attack, some mischievous word against our character or our interests, we venture to ask God to deal with us as we have dealt with our open enemy or our false friend? Are we prepared to abide by the issue of such a claim? Is our forgiveness such that, if God extends forgiveness to us in the same kind and measure that we have meted out to our fellow-man, we shall feel satisfied? 'Consider, and bow the head.'

(2) In the text we have the same fateful reality taken in obverse. God's pardoning grace is here made the incentive and pattern of our forgiveness. We must endeavour to treat one another as God has dealt with us. 'And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another' (being graciously, forgivingly disposed towards each other—that is the precise bearing of the Greek) 'as God also in Christ forgave you.' Well, we are accustomed to look up to heaven for the type and pattern of our virtues. That is what we should naturally do. But the point is still that in its essence the Divine act of forgiveness, while more perfect in quality, with infinitely greater heights and breadths and depths in it, is still the same in kind as the human. We recognize the richness, the scope, the beauty of God's pardoning grace in Christ, and St. Paul tells us we are to do the same, and be the same to one another, as God is to us.

¶ Our willingness to forgive serves a double purpose. It is the proof of God's forgiveness of our shortcomings: for Good Will in God cannot be less and lower than Good Will in ourselves. It is at the same time the best evidence of our fellowship with the Father and with Christ: for forgiveness is the hardest task Good Will has to face; and if we are equal to that until seventy times seven; if, in other words, willingness to forgive unto the uttermost is our permanent attitude, then we share Good Will in its most vital and exacting expression. . . . A man who would not forgive the worst wrong, even if done directly

against himself, or against those dear to him, when satisfied that the wrong-doer was truly penitent, would be out of Good Will; no son of the Father; no brother of Christ; no sharer of the Christian Spirit. A Christ who did not so forgive would be no saviour of the world; no witness to Good Will. A God who would not forgive at the first sign of genuine penitence would be no God of Good Will, but a Devil; meriting not the worship and praise but the scorn and contempt of Christlike men. Forgiveness of the repentant wrong-doer is so essential an attribute of God, so fundamental a quality of the Christ-like Spirit, that God could not be God; Christ could not be Christ; the Christian could not be a Christian without it.[1]

The Imitation of God.

Eph. v. 1.—'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.'

The Revised Version of the New Testament reads 'imitators' for 'followers.' The sound is not quite pleasing, for 'imitation' with us has sunk a little in usage, and suggests the idea of a tame and servile copying, whether of manner, style, dress, or handwriting, which is always the mark of an inferior capacity. The word, however, is the only one which corresponds to the Greek word—of which also we might say just the same disparaging things until we look a little below the surface, and take into account the connexion in which it here stands.

There are places in Scripture where our Lord Jesus Christ is proposed to us as an Object of imitation. 'Be ye imitators of me,' St. Paul says to the Corinthians, 'even as I also am of Christ.' And to the Thessalonians he writes, 'And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord.' Indeed, wherever our Lord is spoken of as our Example, the same thought is involved. The thought is found even in the Old Testament, where we read, 'Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.' And it is expressed in the strongest possible way by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.'

There are four prominent features of the Divine character as it was manifested in our Lord in His life below, to some of which St. Paul must be referring when He makes the imitation of God the Christian ambition and aspiration. We commonly enumerate these as Holiness, Wisdom, Power, and Love. The first and the last of these are specially dwelt upon, here and elsewhere, as the points of possible resemblance between God and His creatures. The precept of imitation is embedded in precepts of these two kinds—love, and holiness. 'Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love.' Just before and just after this precept of love stands the precept of holiness. 'Put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.' 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.' 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.' 'All uncleanness . . . let it not even be named among you.' 'This ye know, that no unclean person . . . hath any inheritance in the kingdom.' 'Let no man deceive you with vain words.' 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.' The two thoughts, love and holiness, alternate with each other all through, and throw the light of an inspired interpretation upon the central precept, which is the imitation of God.

But if the imitation of God consists only in being kind and in being pure, it is impossible to represent religion as having any place or room for the exercise of the intellectual or even the practical powers: it is impossible to prevent the impression from gaining ground that it is a thing, on the one hand, for amiable feebleness rather than for masculine strength—on the other hand, for persons either of few temptations to the indulgence of the passions, or else inclined to that exaggeration of one sin into all sin

[1] W. D. Hyde, *The Gospel of Good Will*, 88.

which finds its natural vent in a literal or virtual monasticism.

Let us consider, therefore, all four points of resemblance.

1. *Holiness.*—Holiness, as an abstract element of character in the Deity, was not the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Jehovah of ancient Israel was distinguished from all the gods of the other nations of the earth by this essential element of holiness. They sang, 'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?' The whole of the Jewish Scriptures breathe with thoughts, figures, symbols of this attribute. It was the central feature of the Jewish religion, and the foundation of all their highest musings in regard to God. In thought and vision, in dream and song, in ecstasy and adoration, He was the 'Holy One of Israel.' The law-giver based all his laws upon the fact of the absolute holiness of God. The priest ministered under the consciousness that he was presenting sacrifices to a holy God. The choristers in the Temple sang His praises in subdued tones, saying in their song, 'Holy and reverend is his name.' In the ecstatic vision of the prophet He was seated upon a throne, while the seraphim of the skies, with veiled faces, cried 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.' In this sense, too, the Israelites were imitators of God. The abstract holiness of His character entered into every abstract notion and system of service. In all the countless laws and ceremonial rites which trammelled the feet of the pilgrim Israelite there was a voice saying, 'Be ye holy; for I am holy.' On the structure of their Tabernacle, on its covering, on its furniture, on its altars, on the robes of the priests, on all the instruments and symbols of their ministrations was written, as in letters of flame, 'Holiness unto the Lord.'

But when Christ came to represent to men the elements of the Divine character He put the abstract doctrine into the concrete form of a life; He wove it into the warp and woof of character; He showed how it affects duty, conduct, aim, ambition in the realm of life generally. And thus He presented to men an imitable element. It is impossible to copy an abstract idea, notion, or even ideal. It must be warm with the red blood of life; it must pulsate with emotions common to men; it must put itself into action—to be understandable and imitable. That is what Jesus Christ has done for the holiness of God. He did not write it on sacred vessels and vestments; He did not inscribe it over the doors of sanctuaries, and chant it in hymns of adoration—He lived it, put it before men in the form of a sinless life, adopted it as the standard rule of conduct, until His life stood out in stainless whiteness against the arched blue of heaven—a solitary example of human perfectness, the realized ideal of the race.

That is what we are exhorted to; it is thus that we are bidden to imitate God. That is the meaning of the words, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Not by contemplation of abstract theories, not by the supposed consecration of certain outside things, but by imitating the Divine motives, aims, and interests; by governing all conduct on the same principles that actuate the Divine energies; and by ruling the whole of life according to the standard set before us in the life of Jesus. The command might be modernized thus—'Be ye holy according to the standard of holiness attained by Jesus Christ.'

2. *Wisdom.*—Now it cannot be denied that there are many texts of Scripture which speak disparagingly of the human faculties as to their power of discovery in the region of the Divine. 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' 'In the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God.' 'The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.' 'I thank thee, O Father . . . because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.' We might multiply such quotations largely, both from the Old and from the New Testament. And, after all, we could scarcely have proved more than all really thoughtful

men admit without proof, that as to the deep things of God and the soul and eternity—certainly as to two principal questions, in ignorance of which it is miserable to live and terrible to die, the forgiveness of committed sins, and the fact and nature of a life after death—there is nothing to be reached by any exertion of the unaided reason beyond conjecture, and conjecture utterly vague and shadowy. Unless God interposes by express revelation to lift the veil, we must walk in darkness and see no light.

But St. Paul speaks to those to whom God has spoken, and who have heard the voice. The question is, Can *these* imitate God in wisdom? Now it is written, 'No man knoweth the Son but the Father.' They therefore who are studying the Son under the Father's teaching are in the most direct way imitating God Himself in the realm of knowledge. It is ignorance of the deepest shade, if it should not rather be called by the harder names of effrontery or of blasphemy, to deny that there is a theology—in other words, a science of God Himself—possessing every attribute of method, of substance, and of certainty which can be claimed by any science whose field is the Cosmos of sense and matter. They who take this for their field of knowledge, make it their life's work, and labour in it, are in the truest sense obeying St. Paul's command in the text, 'Be ye imitators of God.'

¶ Wisdom is His most beauteous attribute: no man can attain unto it: yet Solomon pleased God when he desired it. He is wise because He knows all things; and He knoweth all things, because He made them all: but His greatest knowledge is in comprehending that He made not, that is, Himself. And this is also the greatest knowledge in man.[1]

3. *Power.*—To imitate God's power seems to be an almost unintelligible precept till we begin to ponder it thoughtfully. Then we must be struck with several passages of Scripture which represent power as one of the characteristic Christian endowments—as when St. Paul says, 'God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power'; or our Lord, 'But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you'; or St. Paul again, 'I can do all things'—I have strength (more literally) for all things—'through Christ which strengtheneth me'; or St. John, in the opening verses of the Apocalypse, 'He hath made us kings'; or St. Paul once more, 'All things are yours . . . the world, or life, or death'; or again our Lord Himself—'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne'—'I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me.'

The power in which we are to be imitators of God consists in two things—the one a power over ourselves, the other an influence over others, both alike due to the same cause, the ever-present help and strength of the Holy Spirit.

(1) The man who by the prayer of faith, in the strength of the Holy Spirit, triumphs but for once over some terrible temptation—the man who, when intemperance or sensuality invites Him, is enabled in the might of Jesus Christ, through an agony of struggle, to say 'no' to it—the man who, when an evil temper has hold of him, is enabled to shake it off and tread it under foot, and to become instead gentle and generous and forgiving—that man is really imitating God in the attribute of power. There is nothing presumptuous and nothing pretentious in saying so, because he is actually fighting God's one foe in the might of the one God; and though it is a small victory in itself, and may seem to have no bearing at all either upon the whole life or upon the whole cause, yet it is of the kind and nature of all victory that is worth the name—the man is in fact, just for the moment, sitting down with Christ on His throne, and breaking Christ's foe in pieces like a potter's vessel.

¶ A German child, asked what she did when the Tempter came, answered that when he knocked Jesus opened the door of her heart. Then the Tempter says: 'I did not know that

[1] Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici.*

You lived here; I have come to the wrong house;' and he goes away.[1]

(2) And the imitation of God's power in conquering a sin passes on into the imitation of God's power in the exertion of influence. That marvellous word influence—which is the flowing into one soul of a mysterious something out of another soul—is it not the very highest of God's operations of power? is it not that which quickens dead men out of the sleep of death? is it not that which changed Saul of Tarsus into the blessed Apostle and Evangelist St. Paul? is it not that which even in these late days of the earth is every day bringing some new wicked rebel into the gracious obedience of Jesus Christ—just that flowing in of God's Holy Spirit into the spirit that is in the man? And is there any exertion of God's power quite so wonderful as that? Does St. Paul at all exaggerate when he says that that influence of God upon the individual man brought to newness of life is not only of the same kind, but really on the same scale, as that power which He put forth when He quickened the dead body of Jesus in the rich man's new tomb, and afterwards set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places?

¶ Townsend Harris is known to history as the first envoy of the United States to the newly opened Japanese empire. But to the friends among whom he lived in America before he responded to the call of his government he was known as a kindly, sympathetic man, who was able to work wonders among men and boys of his acquaintance, yet so quietly that few realized what was going on till the changes had been wrought.

An instance of his influence for good, on a most unlikely character in the notorious Ninth Ward of New York City, has been related by his biographer. 'In those days of volunteer fire companies, the fights between rival gangs of rowdies were fearful and often bloody. One of the leading spirits in a leading company, a young Irishman, seemed the incarnation of lawlessness, with apparently no desire to become a decent member of society.' His father and mother were drunkards.

[1] R. C. Joynt, *Liturgy and Life*, 122.

Mr. Harris' opportunity came when the father was killed. 'He went to the funeral, and to the astonishment of his friends rode with the boy in a carriage to the grave, and after a kindly talk invited him to come to see him. He kept his word. Kindness captured the ring-leader in bloody riots. A lifelong influence was gained, and a complete change of life ensued. Besides pointing out a better way, Mr. Harris lent him books and studied the bent of his mind. In later years, when Mr. Harris was in Asia, the reformed man represented in Congress the state in which he was then living.'

It is unlikely that the Irishman would ever have been a useful citizen but for the readiness of Mr. Harris to give time and thought to his redemption. He needed just that human touch to arouse the best that was in him.

Everywhere there are those who, to-day, are ready to respond as he did. It is a fearful thing to take the responsibility of failing to speak the word that will awaken in one of these the faintest desire for a higher life. But how many assume the responsibility every day![1]

4. *Love.*—This is the grandest feature of the Divine Character that is brought before us here. Nay, rather it is the common element in which all other perfections meet; for 'God is love.' 'Walk in love,' exclaims the Apostle, 'as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.' How shall we become imitators of God in this respect? We cannot create love by a mere effort of our will; but we may expose ourselves to influences favourable to its development; we may foster and cherish it, or we may check and hinder it—a thing which it is to be feared too many Christians do. The instincts of love naturally exist within those who are born of God, because we inherit the Father's characteristics. But love grows and is developed by exercise. If, instead of checking these impulses, we encourage them and go on to love, not 'in word, neither in tongue, but

[1] J. T. Faris, *The Book of Joy*, 121.

in deed and in truth,' our disposition to love will be strengthened by loving deeds and words performed or spoken in obedience to the instincts of love. We may help love by watching against that spirit of frigid reserve which is only too prevalent amongst worldly people, or that spirit of reckless independence which savours of Cain, but not of Jesus Christ, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Love grows by cultivating habits of fellowship and sympathy with those with whom such relations are possible; and by cultivating habits of compassion, by putting on, as St. Paul says, 'bowels of mercies' for those with whom fellowship is impossible. We may foster love negatively also by watching against the narrowing instincts of selfishness, or anything that tends to render us self-absorbed, for charity seeketh not her own; and to seek our own is to strangle the life of love at its very birth.

Wherefore let us set
A watch upon ourselves while yet we hold
The reins of will to guide our spirit's choice;
Lest unawares life's chiefest word be Self,
All thoughts revolving round it; and self-love
Staining the substance of its central cell
Colour its very being; and inwrought,
As thread in web, a rotten selfishness
Ruin the whole.[1]

Walking.

Eph. v. 2.—'Walk in love.'
Eph. v. 8.—'Walk as children of light.'
Eph. v. 15.—'See then that ye walk circumspectly.'

THREE times the word 'walk' is used in this chapter. It is a suggestive expression. Though at times we seem to be resting, we are always moving on in this life. Life itself is a journey. Some may be walking in a wrong direction, yet they are walking. Others may be moving very slowly, yet they are walking; and others may be making rapid progress, still they are walking. The phrase implies that we are ever in motion, and making progress in one direction or another.

1. But in order to 'walk' in the right direction we must have *a motive power*. Where shall we find that? The true motive power is suggested to us in the first of these three phrases—'walk in love.' If a man is charged with the love of Christ, he will not be daunted by the roughness or the steepness of the way. But this force of love in our own soul can only be generated by the knowledge of His love to us. Hence the Apostle's pointed reference to this, 'Even as Christ also hath loved us.'

¶ I heard a very private letter written by a Bishop of our Church who had surrendered his bishopric in Australia to be a preaching friar in the back blocks amongst the shearers and sleeper-cutters in those isolated parts of that great continent. He spoke of the hardness of his work and of the disappointing part of much of it, and he closed his letter by saying, 'But it is such a joy, because, somehow or other, I have found a way in which I can express my love to Jesus.' And surely it is not surprising that that must be and is meant to be the great inspiring motive of Christianity.[1]

2. Love will always be power; but besides power we need *guidance*. We need the line and the rails, as well as the locomotive engine and the steam. Now that which guides spiritually is light; hence the second direction, 'Walk as children of the light.' St. John employs the same phrase: 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' The moving power is Love, the directing power is Light.

Light is used in two senses in Holy Scripture. First, it denotes objective truth, and thus it is used of Him who was the Truth, and who came to witness to it. Second, it signifies, inward sincerity and honesty—truthfulness of purpose and singleness of aim. In

[1] Amy W. Carmichael, *Made in the Pans*, 47.

[1] H. St. J. S. Woollcombe.

each of these senses it is easy to see how essential the light is to the Christian's walk. Truly, 'he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.'

Why walk in darkness? Our true Light yet shineth;
It is not night, but day!
All healing and all peace His light enshrineth;
Why shun His loving ray?

Are night and shadows better, truer, dearer,
Than day and joy and love?
Do tremblings and misgivings bring us nearer
To the great God of love?

Light of the world! undimming and unsetting,
Oh shine each mist away!
Banish the fear, the falsehood, and the fretting;
Be our unchanging day![1]

3. But besides power and guidance, is there nothing else needed to ensure a truly Christian walk? Yes, the Apostle gives a third direction: 'Take good heed that you walk accurately,' for, that, in plain English, is the meaning of the word rendered 'circumspectly' in our Version. He who would comply with this direction must condescend to consider the value of little things, for this admonition brings us down to the details of every-day life. Now in these days we need to be specially mindful of the importance of these little things. We are living in times of much intellectual and spiritual activity, of increased knowledge, and of intensified earnestness. And while we thank God for these characteristics of our time, we must bear in mind that these very favourable features, unless we use great watchfulness, may readily engender superficiality and carelessness. If we are to have reality, we must have *carefulness in detail.* Carelessness and want of attention to little things will infallibly mar the career of even the most promising Christian; and how many are thus spoilt.

How many Christians have marred their service and lost their power by the want of accuracy in little things, and have become stumbling-stones, and even scandals, because of the fly that spoiled the ointment. These little things! How many whose theology is correct, and whose conduct is not outrageously inconsistent, yet dishonour the God whom they profess to serve, and bring discredit on religion because of their inaccuracy of walk.

How many Christians are commonly spoken of with a 'but.' 'She is a real Christian woman, but she is a terrible talker.' 'He is a good sort of man, but he can drive a very hard bargain.' Another is 'a very right-hearted person in the main, but he is so given to levity.' Yet another is 'a very worthy man, but he has such a bad temper.' What do these 'buts' arise from? From our allowing ourselves to think lightly of these little things; and so we do not walk circumspectly or accurately; and thus we bring disgrace upon God and His service.

¶ Why is it that Christian people are so often 'difficult to get on with'—'impossible to work with'—'touchy'? Do they know it? Surely they cannot, or they would change their ways!

'She is a saint,' said the writer to a clergyman who knew someone well. 'Yes,' was his reply, 'but she has claws.' 'He is a very nice fellow,' said one about this same cleric. 'Yes—but he can be very nasty when he likes.' When he likes! One dear friend of mine, now gone to his eternal reward, used to feel quite justified in being like a bear with a sore head by giving us the warning, 'I'm in a bad temper to-day!'[1]

[1] Horatius Bonar.

The Measure of Christ's Love.

Eph. v. 2.—'Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice (RV).

It is a great triumph to catch the manner of Christ's love. It is a nobler victory to attain to the measure of it. There are times when we succeed in purging our hearts of the invading devils of malice and vengefulness. We

[1] *The Happy Christian*, 135.

have met the scoffing word without retort. We have taken the opportunity of helping the man who has disdained us in our time of need. We have accepted the lowest seat, when its proffer was meant to humiliate. Yet as time has gone on, and we have found that our conduct was mocked, our meekness despised, and our service accepted with a sneer, the old, fierce passion was surging within us again. We had not attained to the measure of Christ's love.

Paul enforces this demand by two words which have a somewhat different significance. He calls upon us to make our lives 'an offering and a sacrifice.' By the offering he means that continuous and repeated and daily presentation to God of the gift and the service and the obedience of the soul which made up the normal acts of Hebrew worship. Morning by morning, month by month, festival after festival, the devout Hebrew laid his offering on God's altar. By sacrifice Paul suggests that special offering made once a year by the high priest, when the penitent presented himself before God, humbled under a sense of sin, trusting in God's forgiveness, and seeking to find himself cleansed and renewed. The measure of the life which grows love is one of a continuous offering, which rises at times to the costliest sacrifice.

1. *'An offering.'*—There are times when love finds that to make the offering is a delight. There have been hours when an act of renunciation opened out a vista of alluring achievement and our joy welled up in our heart like a spring. But there came the days and years when we grew weary in well-doing. We began to have more regard for our own ease, and our own comfort, and to refuse the constant and unceasing offering which the life of love demands. That is the temptation of our older years, and our securer state, and our strengthened self-will.

¶ A Christian minister of fine mind, with a rare power as an expositor, preached one evening on the words, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.' He urged that love is not love which will not die. A large congregation was bowed down under the searching message. At the close the preacher was asked to visit a dying man. He hesitated, and at last declined, as the hour was late. The messenger went to the dying man's room with a troubled heart. He expressed his regret. But the daughter of the dying man lying so still and shadowed looked up and said, 'What ails the preacher is not the late hour but a selfish heart. He has failed all through life because he has failed in love.' Who is not so condemned?

2. *'A sacrifice.'*—The offering is a tribute of each day's devotion, but the sacrifice is the act of that high hour when what is dearer than life may have to be laid down. When we follow the life of Jesus from the cradle in Bethlehem, through all the years in Nazareth, and the ministry in Galilee and Samaria and Judea, we understand the making of the offering to God. But when we come to Calvary and look up into the face of Christ we understand the sacrifice. So we all come to the hour when we must relinquish some hope, refuse some earthly advancement, take up some burden which will make our steps slow unto the end, accept our cross and carry it with a meek song of resignation which rises to a chant of joy. We have seen the meaning of that in our own time, when brave young spirits laid aside the dream of all their years, and gave up their careers, to make the supreme sacrifice of their lives in their love to their Saviour and their native land. No sacrifice is ever made which is not the sacrifice of love.[1]

¶ Surely Abraham Lincoln's life was such a sacrifice. James Whitcomb Riley has expressed this finely in verse.

A peaceful life;—just toil and rest—
  All his desire;
To read the books he liked the best
  Beside the cabin fire—
God's word and man's;—to peer sometimes
  Above the page, in smouldering gleams,
And catch, like far heroic rhymes,
  The onmarch of his dreams.

[1] W. M. Clow, *The Evangel of the Strait Gate*, 264ff.

A peaceful life;—to hear the low
  Of pastured herds,
Or woodman's axe that, blow on blow,
  Fell sweet as rhythmic words.
And yet there stirred within his breast
  A fateful pulse that, like a roll
Of drums, made high above his rest
  A tumult in his soul.

A peaceful life! . . . They hailed him even
  As One was hailed
Whose open palms were nailed toward heaven
  When prayers nor aught availed.
And, lo, he paid the selfsame price
  To lull a nation's awful strife
And will us, through the sacrifice
  Of self, his peaceful life.

Reparation for Sin.

Eph. v. 2.—"Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God."

Among the things all men are concerned to know is this: How can a sinful man be reconciled with God? That is a question which deserves—and sooner or later must receive—the serious attention of all thoughtful people. Every religion has its reply to this inquiry. We are to consider what is the answer given by the Christian religion.

1. In the first place, where there is sin there must be reparation. That is what no one will dispute; it is a thing self-evident. Reparation must be made by the offender. To do this he must repent. Without sincere repentance no man can be forgiven. The offender must plead in the spirit of the confession, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight; and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' That reparation is indispensable. But the question is, Can our repentance be an adequate reparation for our sins? It is true that the prodigal son was forgiven as soon as he repented. True, also, that no other condition of forgiveness is there even hinted at; but is it therefore true that the repentance made by the offender is a complete and sufficient reparation for his transgressions? Is it really true that every man can reconcile himself with God, provided only that his repentance is sincere? The difficulty is that human repentance, although genuine as far as it goes, is superficial and poor. It may be quite sincere, yet most imperfect at the best. And the reason is that we can only draw near to God in the state to which our sin has reduced us. We are clouded in mind and dulled in heart by our past disloyalties. We simply cannot judge our acts as God must judge them. Every reparation we can make is compromised by our unworthiness. The deepest penitence that ever rose from the conscience-stricken soul cannot escape the solemn law that sinfulness incapacitates from perfect reparation. The great Evangelical school was firmly persuaded that no man can deliver himself. 'Convinced,' says one of their leaders, 'that my sin required a reparation which it was not in my power to make.' Or, as another says in the well-known lines—

> Could my zeal no respite know,
> Could my tears for ever flow—
> All for sin could not atone.

That is certainly the belief of the Christian saints. Those masters of spiritual experiences are not more certain of anything than of the powerlessness of sinful men to make adequate reparation for their sins. That is certainly the Apostolic belief. They know, of course, that God is our Father, and that God is Love. But they also know that God is Holiness. It is easy to say the *Miserere*, and our repentance may be quite sincere. But that our poor apologies should be regarded as a perfect reparation for our sin—that is a thing incredible. And a Deity who accepts them as if they were complete is inferior to a Deity who will not. We are, in fact, reduced to this dilemma—either someone else besides the offender must join in making reparation, or else no perfect reparation will ever be made. But how can this last be true? Surely the moral order of the universe dethroned by man

must somehow be set straight! Reparation must be made by the guilty; but everything he does is incomplete. We pass, then, to a second thought.

2. Can reparation be also made by the unoffending? Can one who did not commit the wrong make reparation for the person who committed it? The answer to this is, Yes. Reparation by the unoffending is one of the most prevailing laws of human life. And it is easy to see the reasons why. The first is because those who really love God are concerned for His interests. They will desire to make Him reparation for the wrong which other men inflict upon His love and goodness. The second reason is because those who really love their fellow-men will join with them in making reparation. The third reason is because religion is no mere private affair between man and his Maker. It is essentially corporate. To say that every man shall bear his own burden is to say what is only half the truth. It must be supplemented by the other maxim: Bear ye one another's burdens, for we are members one of another. It is impossible that reparation should be confined to the offender. Are we not bound to make intercession for each other? And to intercede for another person is to supplement the reparation which they make for themselves. There is, again, one reason more. Because the unoffending is qualified to make a Godward reparation, as the offender is not. For he who has not committed the sin passes a truer judgment on its nature than the man who has committed it.

Take two illustrations. There was a patriotic Jew who said, 'While I was confessing my sin and the sin of my people.' He had his own sins to confess, but he also confessed the sins which his nation had committed. He made reparation for sins which he did not commit. And why? Because he loved his nation, and therefore made their cause his own; and because, being deeply religious, he appealed in their behalf to God. Both his patriotism and his faith constrained him to make reparation for Israel's transgressions. Let us remember that every social reform undertaken in a religious spirit is a Godward reparation for the failings of other people.

Then there is the famous example of St. Monica's intercessions. In the nine years of her son's moral entanglement that saintly woman knelt before the altar every day in acts of reparation. She confessed before God his sins. Her son knew quite well that she was doing this, and ascribes his conversion to her prayers. He committed the sin, she made the reparation, until the day came when he united in the reparation which she had made. And why did St. Monica do all this? The answer is because she loved her God, and because she loved her son. So deep was her human affection for her son that she made his sins almost her own. So deep was her concern for the wrong inflicted by her own flesh and blood upon the Father in heaven that she could do nothing less than offer reparation. And she was qualified, as her son was not, to make this reparation, precisely because she had no share in the sin. And even when he came to himself, and began to make his own reparation, yet still her reparation was immeasurably better than his. For her judgment was more clear since her heart was pure.

Now, all this enables us to understand how it is that we are reconciled to the Father by Jesus Christ. For Christ is the supreme example of reparation by the innocent. Think how uniquely He was qualified for the work of reparation.

(1) First of all, by His sinless perfection. The clearest judgment on a sin is not that pronounced by the sinner, but that pronounced by one who has never committeed the sin. Unclouded insight is the prerogative of moral integrity. Christ, then, precisely because of His freedom from all moral taint, was acutely sensitive to every deviation from inner rectitude, and able to pronounce the truest judgment on the real nature of sin. While all other interveners have sins of their own to confess, He who had no sins of His own was peculiarly enabled to make confession of the sins of His people. By His perfect holiness He was qualified for reparation as no other can ever be.

(2) Then, next, He loved the Father perfectly. He cared supremely for the Father's interests, and lived for the Father's honour and the Father's glory. His life, it has been truly said, was all religion. But also He loved mankind with a devotion which has no parallel. He then, in virtue of these His glorious perfections, deplored the injury which sinful men inflicted on themselves and on the holy love of the Father. He poured out His soul in the words, 'O Righteous Father, the world hath not known thee!' That is the very spirit of reparation. And when He uttered the prayer, 'Father, forgive them,' He was making intercession for the transgressors. And He certainly did not regard His intercession as entirely superfluous to the offender's forgiveness, still less as a gratuitous intervention of a third party between the offender and the Father in Heaven. He was carrying out into action the principle of reparation of the innocent in behalf of the guilty. He was giving Himself up for us, 'an offering and a sacrifice to God.' He was making reparation, as He alone could make, who shared our nature, but not our sinfulness.

3. So far we have seen two things—reparation by the offender, reparation by the unoffending. There is, lastly, a third, and yet more wonderful, to complete the Christian idea; and that is reparation by the offended—reparation made by the person upon whom the sin was inflicted. For the Apostolic doctrine is that Christ is the Incarnate Son. The Eternal Father did not merely forgive on condition that men repent. He furnished mankind with the means of making perfect reparation. And in order to do this He surrendered the Son of His Love. Having one Son, His Well-beloved, He sent Him last unto them. Here, then, is a tremendous fact revealed. It is this. Divine forgiveness is a costly thing, for it involved reparation on the part of the Forgiver. God Himself is the Propitiator. God made in Christ the reparation to the moral ideal which man, so far as he could, had dethroned. The sin of the world had penetrated into the very life of Deity. And God Himself restored what man destroyed.

This is the Christian doctrine of reparation. It is not the substitution of the innocent for the guilty. It is not that Christ makes reparation in our stead. It is that He gathers up our imperfect reparations and completes them. It is that in Him the human race makes perfect reparation. For He is the representative Man—the ideal of humanity realized. He is immeasurably Man. For He is the everlasting Son of the Father making reparation under human conditions. No child of man is ever forgiven on the sole condition that he sincerely repents. For no repentance, no, not the best on earth, is an adequate reparation for sin. Christ the Sinless alone could offer perfect reparation. And it is on the basis of that perfect sorrow, which we cannot make, but which our sinfulness requires, that Divine forgiveness is bestowed upon the penitent.

This perfect reparation, which the Father provided and Christ has made, must by its very nature affect the destinies of the whole of the human race. Men may imagine that they reconcile themselves to God by their own unaided repentance. But in reality it is not so. Every forgivenss which God bestows is the Father's response to Christ's perfect reparation. That is the Apostolic teaching. Depend upon it, sooner or later all men will be convinced of its truth. There will not be in the life everlasting two classes of the redeemed—the men who have made reparation independently of Christ, and the men whose inadequate reparation Christ has supplemented. There will not be two songs in heaven—one of self-congratulation. 'I have redeemed myself by my repentance; God made me live—I made myself a saint'; while others breathe the lowly strain, 'Thou hast redeemed us unto God by thy Blood.' No; the song of all the redeemed alike will be the same. They will none of them ascribe the blessing of their forgiveness to their own poor, inadequate repentances, but to the only Name whereby men can be saved—giving thanks unto Him who took their imperfect reparation and completed it, raised it, cleansed

it, transfigured it, by His perfect reparation, and presented it as our great High Priest before the Father's Throne.[1]

How high Thou art! our songs can own
No music Thou couldst stoop to hear!
But still the Son's expiring groan
Is vocal in the Father's ear.

How pure Thou art! our hands are dyed
With curses, red with murder's hue—
But He hath stretched His hands to hide
The sins that pierced them from Thy view.

How strong Thou art! we tremble lest
The thunders of Thine arm be moved—
But He is lying on Thy breast,
And Thou must clasp Thy best Beloved!

How kind Thou art! Thou didst not choose
To joy in Him for ever so;
But that embrace Thou wilt not loose
For vengeance, didst for love forgo!

High God, and pure, and strong, and kind!
The low, the foul, the feeble, spare!
Thy brightness in His face we find—
Behold our darkness only *there!*[2]

Wrath and Disobedience.

Eph. v. 6.—'Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience' (RV).

THERE are no words in the Bible more difficult than those which speak of the wrath of God. They shocked the amiable Plutarch, and upon their denial were built these strange half-Christian systems which we know as Gnosticism. But when we look into the matter carefully we see that along with the wrath of God on account of wilful sin, the love and mercy of God for the weakness of the sinner is made prominent and emphatic.

1. Our Lord drew a broad distinction between sins of weakness and sins of strength. The first He treated with infinite compassion. But to those who made the little ones offend, to professors of religion who trampled on the law of charity, to the harsh and unforgiving, He used language of great severity. Even to the timid and the frail He spoke more than once with sternness. Those words which have sometimes perplexed devout minds, 'Fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell,' were addressed to His own friends. He was speaking of the persecutions which were so soon to come, when all the engines of terror would be brought to bear upon the people of Christ. Through them He speaks to us all, when the fear of man lies heavy upon us, when some plain duty seems too hard, when we are beginning to play the sophist with our conscience, and forge excuses for wrongdoing. In that hour it will be well if we remember the fear of God. Treason against the light our Lord regarded as a high offence. But He does not speak thus of those imperfections of faith with which the later Church dealt so severely. Always there is a beautiful confidence that those who see Him must love Him, that those who love Him must follow, and that those who follow will come to know. Scripture speaks of Him, reason acknowledges Him, sorrow turns to Him. When He is lifted up, He draws all men. How He draws, and how far, we see in Thomas the doubter.

Let us turn to His teaching and see what He has to say to sinners.

(1) There were many scenes that dwelt in the minds of His disciples. One occurred in the house of a strict Pharisee. Into the midst of the company of men came a woman, a profligate and an outcast. She bent over the couch on which our Lord lay, pouring costly ointment on His feet, bathing them with her tears, and wiping them with her long hair. It was the act of one for whom social restraint had long ceased to exist, a wild frenzy of shame and penitence. It burst from a heart that had been tossed like a feather on the storm of passion. It showed that a new passion had displaced the old, yet still how unreflecting and immoderate! We know what the Pharisee thought; but what would any man have thought? Was it not a new indec-

[1] W. J. Sparrow Simpson.
[2] Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

ency? Was it anything more than a fresh caprice? Could a past, and such a past, be washed away by a gust of weeping? But our Lord threw His shield around that woman without a moment's hesitation, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven.' He asked no questions, and He imposed no penance. Life-long sorrow He knew there would be; but He attached no conditions to His gift of peace. She had fallen, and fallen deeply, through weakness. Peter also fell through weakness and surprise. It is purely needless to tell in detail that magical scene in which he too was forgiven, and bidden to feed the lambs, and promised a cross as his reward.

(2) But there are other passages of a very different kind. We find them especially in the Gospel of St. John, the preacher of love and the Son of Thunder, of whom the later Church told stories which illustrate that singular blending of tenderness and austerity which is so legible in the Gospel and Apocalypse. But they occur in the other Gospels also—in the message sent to King Herod—'Go tell that fox'—in the strong denunciations of the Pharisees, in some of the parables.

2. St. Paul explains the matter in our text when he says in one brief phrase that 'the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.' He held, as surely we may well hold, that all men have some knowledge. Some 'truth of original inscription,' as Whichcote called it; some 'testimony of the naturally Christian soul,' as Tertullian calls it, there is in every child of man. It may be but an aptitude which experience develops, like the power of speech or the use of the muscles, yet, so certain is the seed to grow, that we may speak of it without error as an original part of the heritage of our nature. We can see the good; we can even see, not the absolute best, but the better. It is the teaching of Dr. Martineau, at once sober and true. We are men and progress is possible for us, because we have that strange power of seeing in front of us, and of recognizing the unknown better when it comes. If we grasp it, it leads on to a better still; and so onwards to the heights. But its voice is always a command. 'Thou shalt,' it says to us, or 'Thou shalt not.' It is a command because it conveys the expression of a Will that is higher than our own. And if against that Will we set our own, if to His 'Thou shalt,' we answer 'I will not'—that is evil, and that is the only moral evil. We have brought two personalities into conflict, for the will is the focus of personality, and by that act we have excluded ourselves for the time from the sphere of the Divine Wisdom and Love. We have reached that point where God resists. 'He resisteth the proud.' Rebellion alone is what makes the man evil; it alone makes his act a definite sin.

'Children of disobedience,' the Apostle calls the heathen. Something, at any rate, they knew, and by that something he judges them. And are there none now who go against their own consciences, who, knowing the gospel, yet choose to be unclean, or selfish, or cruel?

But is there not a great comfort in this austere warning? If evil is weakness—why, I shall always be weak. To what can I look forward but an eternity of sin and shame and suffering? But if it is rebellion—if in the Law is life—if fear and pain are but the sanctions and safeguards of that Holy Will, which is not the arbitrary fiat of a despot, but the very nature of God my Saviour—if the root of the whole trouble is in my will—why then, change but that will. My nature is imperfect, yet God made it, and made it perfect for His purpose. He looked upon it, and pronounced it good. It is but the heart and its attitude that are wrong.

Change but that will, or suffer it to be changed. It may be 'drawn,' and the Love that draws it is waiting. Think again of that woman who was a sinner. She too was drawn—who can tell how?—her wicked will was conquered, and that moment it was said unto her, 'Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.'[1]

[1] C. Bigg, *The Spirit of Christ in Common Life*, 25ff.

From Darkness to Light.

Eph. v. 8.—'Ye were once darkness.'

1. 'Ye were once darkness'—that is St. Paul's description of the condition of the Ephesians before the gospel came to them. It is a short sharp sentence, condensing what he says elsewhere. We can hardly read his words without being struck by the extreme darkness of the Apostle's picture of the heathen world. Some have suspected St. Paul of exaggeration, and have marshalled the evidence that can be produced on the other side. There is, indeed, much that can be urged in arrest of judgment. There is the religious Virgil, whose words are so often quoted by Christian doctors, who is regarded by the Emperor Constantine and by the poet Dante as an inspired prophet, showing to others the light that was hidden from himself. There is Seneca, the philosopher, who said so many noble things, and did so many base ones. A little later we find Epictetus, the heathen Calvinist, who sang the praises of God, because, being but a lame old man, he could not show them forth in action. A little later again come Plutarch, so wise and so humane, and the delightful Dion Chrysostom, who consoled himself for the savage vices of Domitian by the simple virtues of the poor country people among whom he found shelter in his exile. And there are many epitaphs which speak to our hearts in the universal language of love and sorrow. The darkness of the human soul is only relative; there is no night without the moon and the stars.

Yet what the Apostle says is true. Consider what he was. He was no theologian of the sacristy, brooding over the wickedness of a world which he had forsaken and ceased to understand. He was not a satirist, like Juvenal, carefully polishing fierce epigrams on the present, with his eyes fixed on the golden days of a past that had never existed. He was not repeating the commonplaces of the pulpit, for as yet they had not taken shape. He was a wandering evangelist, like George Fox, who had traversed the Empire from Jerusalem to Rome, consorting with the poor, or with people of the middle class, knowing the great by hearsay or by what he had seen when he stood before Festus or Gallio as a prisoner. He had been everywhere and seen everything. He had spoken to Athenian professors and Corinthian shopkeepers, to kings, proconsuls and rabbis, to soldiers, and sailors, and town-clerks, and jailers. He had seen the temple of Astarte in Phenicia, and the *ergastula* of slaves, and little infants thrown out to perish in the streets, and the mob streaming back from the circus or the amphitheatre, and what went on under the arches of the colonnades, and the pictures on the walls of dining-rooms. He had heard, while the story was quite fresh, the doings of Caligula and Messalina, and he knew what things people said of one another, what everybody said of Tiberius. We need but read what was being written just at the time by Petronius, a novelist, who, if he exaggerates, does so merely to amuse, and we shall hardly think that St. Paul goes beyond the truth.

2. It is a favourite way with St. Paul to compare the present condition of the saints in Christ with their past—what they are with what they once were; to enhance and magnify the glory and blessedness of their present redeemed estate by setting it side by side with the shame, the guilt, the misery, of that which they have left behind, from which they have been delivered. He bids these same Ephesians remember how in times past they were 'without Christ, being . . . strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ'; or, as it is all more briefly put in our text, 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.' Darkness and light, those two wonderful antagonisms of the natural world, each of them, in so far as it reigns, expelling, excluding the other—these are the only adequate images, if images we may dare to call them, by which he can hope to express what

once his Ephesian converts had been, and what now they were. 'But now,' the Apostle proceeds, 'are ye light in the Lord.' As once they had been not 'dark' only—that, in the eyes of the Apostle, would have been too feeble a term—but 'darkness,' so now they were not enlightened only, but 'light,' 'light in the Lord.' They, a people who sat in darkness, had seen a great light; on them, sitting as in the very shadow of death, a Sun of Righteousness had arisen with healing on his wings. Wonderful change, marvellous contrast between their present state and their past! Which of us, brought up from the beginning in the bosom of the Christian Church, can guess what this must have meant to them? To have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son; to have learned that there was One who had said, and who had a right to say, 'I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life'; to know that, by a free act of His grace, they had been brought into fellowship with Him, had been made members of that new Society which He had founded in this old and dying world, with Himself for its head, with God for their Father, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of light and life, to dwell with them for evermore—was not this a change almost greater than we can conceive? Henceforth they were 'light in the Lord,' not light in themselves. They had known enough of all attempts after that. They had seen in what that had issued for themselves and for the whole heathen world of which they so long had formed part—in gods which were no gods, but only the deification of the worst vices, the self-will, the hate, the lust of men.

¶ All religion begins with repentance, and the appeal to repentance is an appeal to memory. To remember is the ethical method of all ages, probing men to the roots of life, laying bare the springs of motive, revealing the secret things to a man's own astonished soul, tearing his very heart with the despair of memory. Not by any easy facile optimism can true peace and true forgetfulness be achieved. The gate of repentance stands at the entrance of the way of life, and repentance implies the very terror of remembrance, godly sorrow for the past, an enlightened conscience reviewing all that has gone, till the heart is sick, and would give the world for a nepenthe that could bring oblivion.[1]

¶ This morning I was talking on Ephes. v. 8. So much came home to me in dealing with the expression 'ye were darkness,' not 'ye were in darkness'; more than that, casting darkness around one, darkness itself inwardly and outwardly; 'but now are ye light in the Lord,' not only in the Light, but also Light-givers, transformed into the Light of Life, and so Lights. See 2 Cor. iv. 6, and 2 Cor. iv. 10, where both sides are indicated—being in the Light of Truth, and being Lights of Truth. How beautiful are these rays of hope from the Home of Light! It is blessed to let them sun one's heart until they transfigure the scene of the world's woe into a vision of that unutterable Beauty and universal Joy that will spring forth from the groans of the travailing creation.[2]

Children of Light.

Eph. v. 8.—'Walk as children of light.'

St. Paul specially loves the metaphor of light. And it is somewhat startling to notice how different is his conception of enlightenment from that common in modern times, or indeed, from that held in the schools of philosophy of his own day, or by the Gnostics just after him. This latter class of men, who can be taken as typical of many others at very different epochs, meant by 'the enlightened' a select few who had a special capacity for intellectual abstraction and contemplation, and who by such qualities of the intellect were believed to attain to a knowledge of God which was beyond the reach of the ordinary men of faith. But St. Paul, following his Master, is quite certain that the root of true enlightenment lies in the

[1] H. Black, *Comfort*, 157.
[2] R. W. Corbet, *Letters from a Mystic of the Present Day*, 154.

will and the heart. The love of the light is, first of all, simply the pure desire for goodness; and anything that is not this first of all is a counterfeit and a sham. And the true enlightenment is thus not the privilege of a few, but is open to all who will come to Christ.

But it is specially interesting to find that, alike in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians and in St. John's First Epistle to the same Christian community, the conception of light takes so prominent a place. And not without reason, for the Ephesian goddess Artemis was specially connected by her devotees with the moon, the ruler of the night, and no Greek deity was favoured with a more universal cult than was Apollo, the representation of whom as the god of day belonged to the influence of oriental thought upon the later period of the Greek religion.

Light, then, for the Ephesian was a familiar religious idea; it represented to him the health, the freedom, the hopefulness, the movement, of life—in a word, the satisfaction of the best and truest human instincts. To be in the light was to grow, to fulfil the purpose of his existence, to be a man. And thus, when the Christian religion came with its announcement that 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,' it at once commended itself to the experience, such as it was, of his higher self. For it told him in terms not to be mistaken that God is the Source, the sole and ultimate Source, of life in all its forms; that He is the Healer, the Inspirer of hope, the Giver of freedom and movement and sound growth; while all that thwarts and interrupts these has its origin not in Him but in something else.

What a blessed message! Blessed because it brought all that men really wanted into a form in which they could readily avail themselves of it. It focussed, as it were, all spiritual help which hitherto had been dissipated and diffused, all spiritual help which hitherto had been intermingled and entangled with much that was either foolish, corrupt, sensual, devilish, or abstruse and hard to unravel, suitable only for the consideration of the leisured and the cultured classes—it brought all this to a point of contact with every man, woman, and even little child.

How will this spiritual energy of Christ Jesus, pervading human personality, express itself?

1. First of all, it will manifest itself in the light of holiness: the children of light will be distinguished by their radiant integrity, by undimmed brilliancy in all their moral relationships. There will be 'a glory which exalteth' in all their communion with their fellow-men. There will be moral scrupulousness in business, punctilious discharge of obligation, honourable payment of debt, just regard for the rights of others, candour and limpidity in their speech, and always a radiancy in their behaviour. And therefore the children of light will possess luminous moral ideals. They will have nothing to do with the dim compromises of the world. They will pay no regard to the low standards of the contemporary novel, or to the smoke-choked lamps of a sensation-mongering press. The patterns of the 'children of light' are found in the Mount, in the awful effulgence of the holy place.

¶ When Mr. Gladstone was to visit Spurgeon's tabernacle (Jan. 1882) the preacher wrote:—'I feel like a boy who is to preach with his father to listen to him. . . . You do not know how those of us regard you, who feel it a joy to live when a premier believes in righteousness. We believe in no man's infallibility, but *it is restful to be sure of one man's integrity.*'[1]

2. Secondly, the Christ energy will manifest itself in them in the light of hope. The 'real children of light' will always be the most hopeful people in the street. In the presence of a true Christian all non-Christians should be made to pale their ineffectual fires. It is an ill day when the true beacons of hope are found outside the Church of the Lord. It is appointed unto Christians to be dawn-men, morning-men, men with the new visions of the

[1] J. Morley, *The Life of W. E. Gladstone*, ii. 531.

new day. They ought to move about among the children of the world, begetting within their dull spirits the sense of new possibilities and of the glories of a larger life. For all round about there are men and women who have lost their hope and have settled down in an infertile despondency. And it is an ill-fated day when the bright, inviting lane fades out of a man's eyes, and he seems to be hemmed in by the grim walls of an impenetrable Bastille. 'Blessed are they,' says Mark Rutherford, 'who healed us of our self-despisings. Of all services which can be done to man, I know of none more precious.' And surely this is just the service of a child of light! It is his ministry to open out the paths, to unveil vistas of inviting possibility, to let the lamp shine down the lost road! 'Thou shalt be called the restorer of paths.' It is his to recover the vision, to rekindle the waning confidence, to throw a strong hope like a mighty bridge across the impossible, and to tell men and women everywhere that the line of light is always and everywhere the inviting highway of the Lord.

¶ On the way to Rome Marius encountered casually one who was destined to wield a quite immeasurable influence upon him. He met Cornelius, a young noble, a soldier of the Twelfth Legion.

Pater, on behalf of Marius, taxes his copious insight in describing to us the peculiar quality which was manifest in Cornelius, the atmosphere which clung to him, that grace of his which wrought so powerfully upon his hero.

In a word, Cornelius was a Christian, a Christian of the chaste and virgin days, when persecution purged the Church, suffering only those who were saints indeed to bear the sacred name.

'Some inward standard Marius seemed to detect in Cornelius there (though wholly unable to estimate its nature), of distinction, selection, refusal, amid the various elements of the fervid and corrupt life across which they were moving together; some secret, constraining motive, ever on the alert at eye and ear, which carried him through Rome as under a charm.' . . . 'With all the severity of Cornelius, there was (at the same time) a breeze of hopefulness—freshness and hopefulness—as of new morning about him.' It was evident to Marius, further, that everything about Cornelius 'seemed to be but sign or symbol of some other thing far beyond it.' He seemed to live recognizing 'a light upon his way which had certainly not yet sprung up for Marius.' The most delicate and suggestive feature in Pater's description of Cornelius is that Marius observed that he was 'constantly singing to himself.' This singing was never loud or uncontrolled. It was to Marius quite a new kind of singing. It was rather the gentle overflow of some quiet and generous emotion. He would begin to sing as though at the moment he were remembering some private reason for being happy, not that he ever really forgot it.[1]

3. Thirdly, the energies of the Lord Jesus will manifest themselves in the luminousness of praise. The children of light will be gay with cheery gratitude, with the bright, genial spirit of thanksgiving. Gratitude is the superlative expression of grace. Gratitude is the shining culmination of spiritual communion. When grace utters itself in gratitude the mystic circle is complete, and God and man are one. And yet there is a most conspicuous lack of this in the Christian life. Many men have many virtues, but they miss this consummation. They have spiritual energy enough to be faithful, but not enough to be grateful. The rarest garment one meets in the Church is the beautiful garment of praise. And yet, if we only knew it, any other spirit is without sight. There is nothing so full of eyes as the spirit of praise. It is ingratitude which 'errs in vision and stumbles in judgment.' If we had more of the energy of the Lord Jesus our life would be filled with thanksgiving.

I sing because I love thee, Lord,
For simple joy of heart
That in a world that lives by love
I have my little part;
The tide that bears my life along
Moves to an everlasting song.

[1] J. A. Hutton, *Pilgrims in the Region of Faith*, 84.

I sing because I know thee, Lord,
When any thing I know;
Thy presence lights the opening paths
Before me, as I go,
And all the ways I ever trod
Have brought me home, at last, to God.

I sing because I serve thee, Lord;
E'en when my wavering will
Forgets the unforgetting Law
I needs must serve Thee still;
Not as a slave, but as a son,
My soul would say, 'Thy will be done.'

I sing because I trust thee, Lord,
Amid the maze of things;
My soul has nested in Thy peace,
And in Thy storm it sings;
While all around me, taught of Thee,
Thy singers make sweet harmony.[1]

The Light.

Eph. v. 9.—'The fruit of the light' (RV).

This is one of the cases in which the Revised Version has done service by giving currency to an unmistakably accurate and improved reading. That which stands in our Authorized Version, 'the fruit of the spirit,' seems to have been a correction made by someone who took offence at the mixed metaphor, as he conceived it, that 'light' should bear 'fruit,' and desired to tinker the text so as to bring it into verbal correspondence with another passage in the Epistle to the Galatians, where 'the fruits of the spirit' are enumerated. But the reading 'the fruit of the light' has not only the preponderance of manuscript authority in its favour, but is preferable because it preserves a striking image, and is in harmony with the whole context.

The Apostle has just been exhorting his Ephesian friends to walk as 'children of the light,' and before he goes on to expand and explain that injunction he interjects this parenthetical remark, as if he would say, To be true to the light that is in you is the sum of duty, and the condition of perfectness, 'for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.' That connection is entirely destroyed by the substitution of 'spirit.' The whole context, both before and after the text, is full of references to the light as working in the life; and a couple of verses after we read about 'the unfruitful works of darkness,' an expression which evidently looks back to this text.

1. We see the fruit of the light in *Nature*. The more we look at Nature, and the more we note the conditions of growth around us, the more we find that, of all things, light is the most essential condition of fruitfulness. Without light no vegetable or animal growth reaches perfection of colour or development. Rob the plant of its light, and you blanch it; rob any creature of the light, and you take out of him all colour and stamina.

¶ I passed through a conservatory the other day in which there was an orange tree with fruit upon it. And the oranges it bore looked very much the same as those which come to us from abroad. 'Are these oranges good to eat?' I said to my host. 'No,' answered he, 'they have very little flavour or sweetness about them.' 'The fact is,' he went on to say, 'they want sunshine.' His gardener had been able to give them heat—heat as great as that of their native land. But they wanted more than heat—they wanted clear, bright sunshine. That the gardener had been unable to supply. So the oranges grew up tasteless and insipid. The sweetness of the orange is 'the fruit of the light.'[1]

2. We see the fruit of the light in our *bodily health*. 'Light baths' and 'sun baths' are recommended as cures for certain ailments. We may not be able to tell how light and sunshine act upon the human body, but it does not need a doctor to tell us that light is essential to health.

¶ I read somewhere that some years ago in one of our large towns an institution for the

[1] W. C. Tarrant.

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Unfettered Word*, 260.

blind was erected. The committee put their wise heads together and decided that, as the building was for the blind, it would be waste of money to go to the expense of many windows. Scientific ventilation and heating were provided, but very few windows, because, as the committee very logically put it, it was of no use in the world providing windows for those who could not use them. In time the asylum was opened and the poor sightless patients settled within it. But, somehow or other, things did not go well with them. They began to sicken one after another; they were restless and unhappy—craving for something, they knew not what. And, after one or two had died, and well-nigh all had been ill, the committee sat on the matter, and someone suggested that what the poor things really wanted was 'light.'[1]

3. We see the fruit of the light in *Christian character.* All moral beauty and dignity is, in truth, the 'fruit of the light.' This is true of the moral excellence we find in pagan countries. There are great and touching virtues to be found amongst the dwellers in heathen lands. The early Christian Fathers used to speak of the virtues of the heathen as 'splendid vices.' But, as Dr. Findlay says, Jesus Christ and His apostles never said so. Jesus said, 'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold.' The fact is, God has not left Himself anywhere without witness. There is the 'light which lighteth every man coming into the world.' The Spirit of God is at work illuminating human minds far outside the Christian pale. And the devotion and love and self-sacrifice that we find in pagan lands and amongst heathen peoples are just broken gleams of the light that blazed in its full glory upon the world in the face of Jesus Christ. The fact is, the New Testament writers far surpass us in breadth and sweep of vision. Listen to this from John, 'All love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.' 'All love is of God'—love has its home in heathen hearts even as it has in ours. That love is of God. It is a gleam of the eternal light, and it lends a touch of beauty and charm to lives that are otherwise bare and sordid enough. Wherever we find beauty and glory of character it is everywhere the 'fruit of the light.' And the brighter the light, the greater the moral beauty. That is why we find the finest illustrations of the greatness of human character in Christian lands.

¶ If I were asked to quote illustrations of the greatness of human character, I would never quote Socrates, great man though he was, with his imperfect moral sense and his easy tolerance for sins and vices which it is a shame even to speak of. And I would never quote Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, with their philosophy and granite and cold steel. I would quote men like John, the beloved apostle; and Paul, the lion-hearted apostle of the Gentiles; and the holy Francis, 'God's Fool,' as he was sometimes called; and Savonarola, the Catholic Puritan; and Richard Baxter, the faithful pastor of Kidderminster; and George Herbert, the saintly minister of Bemerton; and David Livingstone, the pioneer of Africa; and Charles Gordon, the Bayard of these modern days; men who combined in themselves strength and gentleness and stainless purity of soul. It is in these men and their like that you see manhood at its best, and they were made by the power in them and upon them of the Lord Jesus. The perfect character is the 'fruit of the light.'[1]

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Unfettered Word*, 260.

The Fruit of the Light.

Eph. v. 9.—'The fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth' (RV).

St. Paul is so eager that he commits what the critics would consider rather an impropriety—he mixes up his figures of speech more than once. For example, he mixes up his figures of the temple and the body, because he is far more anxious about getting the truth impressed than about his figures of speech. So

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Unfettered Word*, 263.

it is here. He takes a little liberty with metaphorical language in order to set forth the truth of which his mind is full, and he not only uses the Hebraic expression 'children of light,' but actually speaks of the 'fruit of the light.' Perhaps he had in mind that beautiful text in the Psalms, 'Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.' It is put down in seed and is sure to come up. But there light is taken as a figure of gladness, joyfulness: here it is rather a moral quality which light sets forth, and the Apostle says that the fruit of light is goodness, righteousness, and truth.

¶ 'Light is sown for the righteous.' I remember, as a boy, finding it difficult to understand those words, and I only understand them very imperfectly yet. But I have since then gone forth to the field and seen the sower cast broadcast the seed into the open furrows, and I have seen the sun shine brightly in the cloudless heavens and scatter his rays into the same furrows with unlimited prodigality, and I have felt that the only thing sown in that field has not been grain but also God's light. As the farmer has sown his corn, God has been sowing His sunshine; and it is this blending of the sunshine and the wheat that secures the rich blessing of harvest. When the harvest comes at last, it is not only the result of what man has been sowing in golden grain, but also the result of what God has been sowing all the while in rich gleaming sunlight. Here the Apostle speaks of the fruits of that light which the Psalmist says is sown for the righteous. He had seen God sowing light in the furrows of a godly man's heart and he had seen the result of that sowing in the glorious harvest of a godly life.[1]

1. The fruit of the light is in all *goodness*. Of course that is a comprehensive term, opposed to all evil, but especially to all malice. It is a remarkable thing that the word translated 'goodness' never occurs in what we call heathen Greek books, just as if the poor heathen had never got the thing thoroughly developed among them. They had not even the word. The word occurs only in the Bible, and the Apostle Paul uses it frequently, obviously meaning kindness in feeling and in act—kindness in feeling, which we call benevolence, kindness in act or deed, which we call beneficence. Both are combined in this 'goodness,' and in the description of the 'fruit of the Spirit' in the Galatians it is associated with long-suffering and gentleness, as opposed to those hateful works of the flesh—strife, wrath, and envy.

It is significant that in speaking of the fruits of the light Paul puts 'goodness' first: for that is precisely the one that is frequently found lacking on an otherwise healthy tree. The fruit does not ripen to sweetness. The religion of some Christians is sour. They are respected, but not loved. They do show the things that are 'honest' and 'true,' but not many of the things that are 'lovely and of good report.' They are Christians, but not lovable Christians; and so they do not attract others to Christ by the magnetic winsomness of their own discipleship. A living and lovable Christian is ever one of the most powerful arguments for the gospel. No infidel ever refuted that.

¶ In the Life of Henry Drummond Mr. R. R. Simpson writes as follows:—'At an inquiry meeting in the Assembly Hall I spoke to a bright looking young man, and found that he had decided for Christ. On my asking him what led him to decision, the striking answer was, "It was the way Mr. Drummond laid his hand on my shoulder and looked me in the face that led me to Christ." '[1]

2. The fruit of the light is in all *righteousness*. Righteousness is opposed to all crookedness or dishonesty, and it is inseparable from the highest types of goodness. The beneficence of an unjust man is little worth, and yet we may see such a thing. It is a just man that does good. The unjust man cannot make up for his injustice by doing a bit of

[1] D. Davies, *Talks with Men, Women and Children*, vi. 377.

[1] G. A. Smith, *Henry Drummond*, 98.

kindness here and there; it won't do; it must be the man who does justly, who, loving mercy, walks humbly with his God.

¶ It is not, I hope, a mere ingenious fancy that has pointed out to us that the very handicraft that our Saviour was pleased to make Himself familiar with in the years He spent in Nazareth was one that requires the application of the most exact rules of rectitude. They said of Him, 'Is not this the carpenter?' and carpentery cannot be carried on without some knowledge or some application of exact practical geometry. Now what does practical geometry go upon? It must proceed upon principles that are quite absolute and incontrovertible. There are disputes in the world, but there are none about the mathematical principles upon which geometry proceeds, and upon which, therefore, the carpenter proceeds. As a carpenter uses his rule and plummet, he must obey the most exact geometrical principles, he must keep his straight line without the least deflection; the straight line must be straight. This is what people do not understand in conduct. He must have his circle a real circle, every point of the circumference being equidistant from the centre. He must cut his right angle absolutely true. Not otherwise can he produce work that will fit together or bear inspection. Is it not a significant thing, does it not show a love of righteousness—which is just moral straightness as opposed to crookedness or wrongness—that Christ deigned to spend years upon years in constant familiarity with just that kind of occupation or handicraft which illustrated the eternal fitness of that which is right, and the impossibility of making that which is crooked serve the same purpose as that which is straight? So what did He do in His years in Nazareth? He was all the time working righteousness. If He put His hand to a piece of wood, He was working righteousness in symbol on the piece of wood. Then He went out of the carpenter's shop, and showed Himself to Israel; and He went forth as the servant of God to fulfil all righteousness, to show the straight line of truth and conduct to mankind, as a prophet of God to teach righteousness, even as in the 40th Psalm it is said, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.'[1]

3. The fruit of the light is in all *truthfulness*. Now truth is opposed to lying, which is one of the works of darkness, and must be put away. God desires truth in the inward parts, and He knows that naturally we have not got it. We have got deceitful hearts, and He puts truth into the inward parts. How? Why, by putting Christ into them, by filling the mind with holy light, by possessing the heart with Jesus Christ, who is the Truth, by leading us to be so engrossed with Christ, and so absorbed with Him, and so to follow Him in this as in other respects, that there shall be no guile found in our mouths because there was none in His.

Something more than truth of words—our speech, our action, our thoughts are consistent and harmonious and transparent. There is no affectation. There is no make-believe. There is no pretence. There is no 'little pitted speck' in the garnered fruit. The man is an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. We would be saved from sham work, sham feeling, sham service, sham orthodoxy.

¶ We felt—we could not but feel—the large, unhampered guilelessness in Mr. Gladstone which, in spite of obvious subtleties of intellectual dialectic in talk and discussion, still made itself known as the most radical and elemental characteristic of the man. He was transparent as a babe—even when he was most acute in framing puzzling distinctions, or hurrying us over the thinnest possible ice. You saw the man flinging himself into his case, with the keen abandonment of a child without reserves. You might hear endless stories of the versatilities and elasticities and shifts by which he had thrown his opponents in the public arena of debate; but nothing could ever shake your conviction that guilelessness was the main note of his character. Deep down in the life there was the untouched heart of a little child.[2]

[1] D. Fraser.
[2] H. S. Holland, *Personal Studies*, 31.

Now, all these three types of excellence—kindliness, righteousness, truthfulness—are apt to be separated. For the first of them—amiability, kindliness, gentleness—is apt to become too soft, to lose its grip of righteousness. And it needs the tonic of the addition of those other graces, just as we need lime in water if it is to make bone. Righteousness, on the other hand, is apt to become stern, and needs the softening of goodness to make it human and attractive. The rock is grim when it is bare; it wants verdure to drape it if it is to be lovely. Truth needs kindliness and righteousness and they need truth. For there are men who pride themselves on 'speaking out,' and who take rudeness and want of regard for other people's sensitive feelings to be sincerity. On the other hand, it is possible that amiability may be sweeter than truth is, and that righteousness may be hypocritical and insincere. So Paul says, 'Let this white light be resolved in the prism of your characters into the threefold rays of kindliness, righteousness, truthfulness.'

¶ Some men have had a wide public reputation for saintliness which was sadly belittled by a closer acquaintance with them in private or domestic life. The 'saint abroad' has sometimes turned out to be only a trouble or a terror to wife and children at home. The question was once asked regarding a neighbour, 'Is he a Christian?' 'I cannot tell, for I never lived with him,' was the suggestive reply. It may therefore be profitable for me to ask whether my most intimate friends can bear witness to my perfect consistency of life, as that is seen close at hand: and to my goodness—in disposition, in talk, and in act; say sympathy, and generosity, and love: to my righteousness too—my high principle, my scrupulous honour, my faithfulness to duty even in the smallest things; and to my truth—my sincerity without make-believe or pretence, my real and not sham religiousness, my transparent unblameableness, which shows me to be a Nathanael, 'in whom is no guile.'[1]

[1] G. H. Knight, *These Three*, 35.

The Authority of Experience.

Eph. v. 10.—'Learn in your own experiences' (Weymouth).

Jn. xvi. 14.—'He will take of what is mine and will make it known to you' (Weymouth).

THE working proof of that which we call reality is a consensus of experiences. The greatest things in life are not the subjects of pure science and cannot be proved by mathematical demonstration. But experience affords its own working proof. Where personal love and honour and truth are concerned we grow in inward knowledge, and this growth for us is a working proof, and is a constant source of increasing joy and wonder. We learn in our experience and experience creates for us authority.

It does not seem that Jesus expected much immediate result from the two or three years of His work. He lived His life and gave to men ideas, great concepts of God and man, and having done that He died with great confidence that the Spirit He had brought into human life would, step by step, develop His purpose and teach men His way. 'He will take of what is mine and will make it known to you.' This is just one of those fundamental ways of thinking where Jesus asks for nothing but the will to know, the will to be open to experience of truth. Truly to worship the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of all Truth is ardently to desire to get to reality, and to know what things and thoughts really mean. Really to wait upon God is to open the mind and soul to the inner revelation and the experience which may, or may not, give what we expect. The true spirit of science is also the true spirit of religion, for it is the spirit of all truth.

Jesus told His disciples that this Spirit would convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. And truly there are few things more difficult for men to accomplish than to find out how to know good and evil, how to be just, and how to be wise, for these things are among the major problems of

the mental and spiritual life. Jesus offers a guide in this struggle of the soul, the Spirit of Truth.

And then He identifies Himself with this Spirit. 'I am the Truth.' The Christ, the Seed, the Light, in the human soul is the revealer of truth if, and when, the soul bends its will to the revelation, listens to the Spirit within.

What does Christ ask men to seek experience of? A Spirit of love and truth, a knowledge or experience of that Spirit within, and a kingdom of humanity which is a personal and social expression of that Spirit. Seek, He says, in effect, seek that Spirit and that Spirit will take of what is Mine and will make it known to you. It is the Spirit which gives life. In this teaching of Christ's there seems nothing that is a mental burden, no articles of belief, no creed, but a most absolute spiritual freedom. He asks nothing but the willingness to seek and to learn in a man's own experience. But He knows His own experience and gives it to His fellows with a conviction that is too great and too searching to be ignored.

The wonderful thing here is that multitudes of human minds, the most cultured and those of the utmost simplicity, bear one long and deep testimony that that conviction comes home to them as the deepest of all truths, for they have learnt in their experience that it is precisely through a knowledge of this experience of Jesus, and through the pursuit of the way He suggests, that they too have gained convincement of the life of the Spirit in their own souls.

So it comes to be to them authority. Not the authority which is commonly meant by authority, of outward imposition, but the authority of inward conviction, which allows of no gainsaying. It responds to the innate need of the seed in man's spirit, feeds, inspires and illuminates him; gives him no mental or spiritual fetters but the progressive and redemptive knowledge of eternal life. That indeed is the saving grace, God's free gift, the finding of the light of Christ in the soul.[1]

[1] C. Heath, *Christus Consolator*, 33ff.

¶ The revivalism of William Booth proceeded from the depths of his own soul as well as from his theological convictions. He was a man sharply conscious of his own faults, plagued by temptations of body and mind, the unhappy victim of a morbid infirmity. So far as the current theology confirmed his settled opinion that every ill wish which visited his mind came from Satan, the adversary of souls, so far theology influenced his conduct. But it was really this presence in himself, this continual companionship, of a nature inferior to that higher nature of which he was conscious in moods of religious exaltation; the perpetual haunting, the unlifting pressure of an evil spirit antagonistic to his peace; the breath upon his cheek, the whisper in his ear, the guidance at his elbow, the flame and fire perpetually within his blood of a demon plotting the eternal ruin of his soul—it was this root of evil in himself, and not theology, which drove him first upon his knees and then into the streets as a preacher of salvation.

Nothing was more certain to him than the existence of Satan—the proof thereof tortured his own heart. So evil did he feel himself to be that his thought was not in the least staggered by the punishment of eternal Hell. So profoundly conscious was he in moments of religious peace of a relief from this inner torment that he could believe it came only from the mercy of God, a gift of the Son who had died to save his soul from death. Thus, so far as theology confirmed his experience, he was a theologian; but it was out of his own travail of soul that he fashioned his religion; and religion for him, from first to last, was a matter of the most personal and piercing experience. He feared and hated the Devil; he adored the Son of God, who had given him the victory over sin. Saturated through and through, penetrated and interpenetrated by this sense of an overwhelming gratitude to Christ; conscious, also, in himself of the most pervasive and sufficing happiness in his union with God, what could he do but go to those in darkness and ignorance, proclaiming with a vociferation, never mind

how loud and alarming, the good news of a free and perfect salvation?[1]

Indifference.

Eph. v. 14.—'Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee' (RV).

1. THE words are a quotation; but it does not appear whence they are taken, or where St. Paul found them. The mystery enhances their beauty. The Apostle introduces them thus: 'Wherefore he saith.' But who was it that said? Who wrote them? or who taught them to Paul? No one can say. The formula is common in quotations from the Old Testament; but where in the Old Testament are these words to be found? Some have thought them to be an adaptation from the prophet Isaiah, 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee'; but such an adaptation is so very free that it would require a very sharp sight to detect the connection with the original.

But there is another suggestion, and it takes the fancy at once. The words, in the original, are poetry, and not prose; they are three lines of verse, measured and rhythmical, and such as a scholar could scan:

> Awake thou that sleepest!
> And arise from the dead!
> And Christ shall give thee light!

What can they be but part of some old hymn; some spiritual song wherewith, in those far-off days, the people were wont to make melody in their hearts? Perhaps it may have been as familiar to them as Bishop Ken's Morning Hymn is to us:

> Awake my soul, and with the sun
> Thy daily stage of duty run!

Thus read, the lines take strange hold on the heart. They sing themselves to the ear, as part of some sweet psalm of life in use in the Church in the days of her first devotion to her Lord and King.

With this song on her lips the Church went forth, clad in the armour of light, strong in the joy of salvation; and darkness and the works of darkness fled before her.

2. But it is significant that the hymn should have been sung in the Christian congregation—sung by the Church to itself when the world was shut out. The fact makes us call to mind that our Lord solemnly warned His Church to watch, 'lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping'; and that on another occasion He employed the figure of sleeping virgins to express a more than probable state of the Church while He tarried. In His letter by the Apostle John to the Church at Sardis, He charges it in plain terms with sleeping the sleep of death: 'I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.' What a ghastly picture! A company of Christians meeting for their solemn services, going through all the prescribed ritual of the Church, prayers, hymns, Eucharist, giving each other the kiss of peace, and all the time but 'magnetic mockeries,' with no living energy prompting those external actions!

3. The world has changed—and changed, no doubt, for the better—since the days of St. Paul. We have only to look largely at history to see that sound progress has been made in many directions. It is, however, not safe to assume that general gain is inclusive of gain in every particular, and that there can be no such thing as backward movement and relapse. It is still true that men in this century as in the first, in this country as in Asia Minor, need, and perhaps as much as ever, to have the ancient cry, 'Awake! Arise!' addressed to them. So far as spiritual life is concerned, too many of the teeming population of this land are like men asleep in a vast camp—asleep in the darkness of the night. Around us are those who, so far as the spiritual life is concerned, are dead. They may be keen business men, they may have a ready grasp of affairs, they may be wonderfully in-

[1] H. Begbie, *William Booth*, i. 281.

telligent in worldly matters; but if you test them in a thousand ways by the spiritual tests which God has given us, you will find that, so far as the higher spiritual life is concerned, they are dead or dying. Tested by any repugnance to sin, by any aspirations after holiness, by any desire to know God—they are dead. Tested by their use of the means of grace, by prayer, by a knowledge of Holy Writ, by attendance at the Lord's Table—they are dead. Tested by any interest they feel in the missionary work of the Church abroad, in the tasks of the Church here at home, in the school, in squalid streets, in lonely lives—they are dead.

Religious indifference may be due to many and varied influences. The pressure of work, and care, and trouble; a growing craving for sensuous delights; the desire to be rich or to be distinguished. Ambition—personal, professional, social, political—may throw the spiritual faculties into a deep sleep. Conscience is too intrusive, too fond of spoiling bargains, so its voice is disregarded till it falls into silence. The unselfish and generous affections which suggest giving instead of getting, serving instead of being served—these also are dulled and drugged by special pleading of one sort or another. The higher nature is not found to be serviceable in common enterprises, so it is neglected; principles are set aside for the sake of achieving a worldly success; and the culture of faith and love gets less and less attention.

¶ The great Napoleon, we are told, once said of himself that he deliberately excluded from his mind all thought of God and the invisible things, and that it was only by doing so that he accomplished what he did. And it is, one often fears, by a similar exclusion that so many here and everywhere are able to gratify their cravings for pleasure, for money, for distinction—to build up what we call their fortune, and to get and keep a place in what is described as good society. They succeed, but their success is a spiritual calamity; sense triumphs over spirit, the lower life over the higher; they go to sleep within—asleep to God—asleep to all the diviner meanings of this present world—asleep to that life which is not mere continuance, but progress, which consists, not in the quantity, but in the quality of one's days and years.[1]

4. But God does not leave such sleepers to themselves. He is with them in the darkness; and dreams of early aspirations and purposes unrealized, and of life that might have been, disturb the slumbers that else were the slumbers of death. They have their more serious seasons, when the strokes of Providence—hard and painful things—break their stupor and make them feel the tragedy of life:

> When like a long-forgotten strain
> Comes sweeping o'er the soul forlorn
> What sunshine hours had taught in vain.

There are seasons when the best memories and impressions of vanished days revive with a freshness which stings them into a sense of all they have failed to win, and all that they have thrown away; seasons when some written or spoken word of a fellow-man sends home a truth that pierces the heart and brings before them visions of a life they are not living, and of a battle they are not fighting; seasons of quiet rest by the solemn sea, amid the great mountains, beneath the silent stars, when they hear the eternal voices; seasons when death has no dominion over their thought, and the memory of those passed away comes back again with all the vividness of yesterday, and they hear again voices which once persuaded them to be Christians; seasons when, without the intervention of earthly instrumentalities, the spirit of God speaks to the slumbering soul, and the invisible and spiritual stand out with the clearness of everlasting reality, and they feel as they will surely feel when all this pageantry of mortal life is ended, and God and the things of God are all in all.

¶ In Laurence North's novel, *The Golightlys*, Dorian Stepney, the Oxford scholar, disregards the advice of the Master of his college and throws overboard his ideals that he may gain a living by editing a journal of the

[1] J. Hunter, *God and Life*, 73.

frivolous and sensational type. Years after he revisits Oxford and goes to report himself to the Master. 'Curiously moved, he pushed open the door of the Master's lodgings, and went up the wide stair to the study. He knocked, as he had knocked long ago at another door across the quadrangle. The scene was different, but the voice, the greeting were the same. How curiously naked one felt in the Presence without a gown.

Half an hour later Stepney, returning to the Bardolph, realised that there was a spiritual nakedness no vestments could hide from the eye of understanding. It was not that Mr. Seneschal had been anything but kind, even affectionate, but in that moment Dorian knew at what cost he had purchased material well-being. On the Master's wall still hung the old German woodcut of the devil playing at chess for a man's soul. Its mockery seemed more subtle, more poignant than it had been on that day of decision long ago. The gulf between Stepney and his old tutor yawned wider than ever. The Master might be limited with the inevitable limitations of the don, but he had at least lived for an ideal. The finger of the world had laid no soiling touch upon that serene spirit, from first youth tested up to extreme old age, and now towards the end, beautiful and gracious with the light of a clear winter sunset. Before that negation of things material Dorian stood a twice-convicted renegade, uneasy as the wilfully grosser man must be before the spiritual. He had denied his destiny; Seneschal had fulfilled his. The one must always remain a silent reproach to the other. The Master had seen in the Dorian of long ago a strange kinship with his own youth. He had known the right path for his pupil. But the boy took Fate wantonly into his own hands, and he had his reward. There could be no turning back.' [1]

[1] P. 231.

The Challenge of Christ.

Eph. v. 14.—'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'

THESE words are not Paul's own words, but an echo from some Christian challenge ringing through his soul. It is quite possible they are a quotation from a message of Jesus not found in that form in the gospel. Whether they are literal words of Jesus or no, they contain the authentic note of Christ's message to man. The message of Jesus and the message of Christianity is a summons to life. Jesus went about always calling to sunken souls lying in some quiet backwater or stranded like a derelict on some shore of slackness or indifference—Rise up and walk! Go, and sin no more! He was always summoning men to life, challenging them out of their foolish ease and contentment, to leave all their unrealities and false values and to come into the great reality, which is to come face to face with God.

His message here is the summons: 'Awake, thou that sleepest.'

Now there are various kinds of sleep.

1. There is the sleep of *doubt*. There are people who stand on the borders of the spiritual land hesitating, not sure. They want to be sure. They say, 'If you will make me sure of God I will accept the love of God. If you will cut this intellectual tangle for me and make things straight I will step into the spiritual world. Give me a faith cut and dried that I can rest on, and I will trust Jesus Christ to-morrow.' So they stand hesitating on the borders of the spiritual world, waiting to come in, kept back by the doubt which is slowly, if they only knew it, gnawing their spirits all the time.

But if we could give a man a faith that was cut and dried, it would be only a poor and lifeless thing, like a plant which we cut and put in our room, which loses its beauty and its fragrance. I do not believe you can

get a living faith free from doubt. I do not believe you can get a living faith except by going out with such faith as you have, facing the storm and holding on to that faith amid all the challenges of unbelief. That is the only way in which faith becomes vital.

After all, what is faith? Faith is not an assent to a logical argument. It is a consent to a way of life. Again and again people who talk of their religious doubts are only indulging in a kind of camouflage and refusing to face up to the moral challenge. It is not a question of what you think, or whether you can solve this or that intellectual puzzle. It comes to a question of choice. What kind of a man or woman do you want to be? Do you want to be the sort of man Jesus Christ can make you, or the sort of man the atheistic philosopher can make you? The only way to solve our doubts is to step out boldly with such faith as we have. 'Christ shall give thee light.' Follow and obey the voices you know in your own heart. The light will come. When a man steps out in faith, God steps in in assurance. When a man launches out in faith, God comes to bear him up and carry him on. The great perplexities and difficulties of this life can be solved only when you have inside knowledge, and you can get inside knowledge only when you are in the Kingdom and facing things for yourself. A man has only to walk toward God an inch, however dim the way, and in blazing light God will advance a mile to him.

Only step out, and doubt will vanish. 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'

2. There is another kind of bondage of sleep. It is the sleep that comes from the bondage of *sin and evil habit.* There is sin in the world to-day, just as dark as it was in the old days; sin in the hearts of men and women, dark passions blackening them day by day, yet often disguised so that you would never know it. They know well enough that sin is real. If you ask many of those who are bound and passion-haunted to-day what the reason is, they will tell you circumstances are too much for them, the past is too much for them, or their temptations are too much for them. They have lived a life which has brought the kind of consequences they are unable to face, and they can only go on and let the past do its deadly work.

Now the voice of Jesus Christ to these people is very clear. There is not anything a man has done or has been, not anything that he is at this moment, however darkened or degraded his life may be, that can prevent him from stepping into freedom and deliverance and power. There is not any kind of past but Jesus Christ can help you to make a future of it. There is not anything that can keep a man or a woman from a clean progressive life except his or her own will. 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.'

People talk about their weak wills as keeping them out of the Kingdom. It is not their weak wills that keep them out. That is a wrong understanding of psychology. The weak will does not keep us from rising. It is the fact that we believe our will has not the power to rise. That is what modern psychology is teaching us, and it is perfectly right. We can, because we think we can. That was the power of Jesus Christ. He made men think they could, and wherever He did that they arose. That is His power to-day. In the atmosphere of Jesus hope springs up, and the fatal burden is lifted from the will. Only listen to Jesus, the Jesus of the Gospels, the Jesus of the Cross, the Jesus of the risen life, the Jesus who is alive to-day, with all the forces of God's universe and God's heart, focussed in Him for us. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead—whatever it is—and Christ shall give thee light.

3. Take a third bondage. It is that of *fear.* People are just afraid; it is fear that keeps them out of the Kingdom more than anything else. People are afraid to step out for fear that they will not be able to go on. They would rather not try than fail. They do not realize how much better it is to be the kind of fool that fails than the wise man who never

tries at all. People are afraid they will have to give up so much. They are afraid of the demands of Christianity. But you never think of the demands of Jesus when you have seen Jesus. You never think of what Christ wants you to give up; your mind is so full of the things He gives you, and wants you to do and to be.

There is another fear to-day and it may be the fear of honest men. It is the fear of the world around us to-day. Men know that inevitably this call and challenge is going to bring them right up against a social order and right up against an international order which are unchristian in many respects and which demand change. So they feel the thing is too hard and they stand back from Christianity. As somebody says, the greatest obstacle to the Christian faith to-day is not that men do not believe it is true, but that men believe it will not work. They look at the difficulties, social, economical, international, in business life, and they wonder how Christianity can be got to work. Well, the world has to face the challenge. Either Jesus was right, or He was wrong. Either He knew the world, or He did not know it. If He did not know the world, He is of no use to us. Either Jesus realized where light and truth would lead men, or He did not realize it. In the latter case, it were better to throw it all over, and go back to the doctrine of brute force at once! Do not believe that for a moment. Believe that Jesus Christ came with a faith which is adequate to life in every direction. Jesus came to preach a life which is Christian through and through in all its relationships, and to preach the possibility of it. Christ knew of a world which, with all its resources, physical and spiritual, waits to back the man who will step out in faith and follow Him to the end. If a man is willing to go where God leads, God will see him through to the end of the journey. It is a long road, and there are many difficulties, but if a man is looking for a road in which there are no difficulties, he is looking for an impossible place. The very fact that we are getting somewhere is often just revealed by the fact that we are getting into difficulties. You may be very suspicious of the road of life on which you are walking, if it leads you into no difficulties. They are there to stimulate us. They make us strain our brains and our effort. They make men of us. They deliver us out of the vegetable stage. And wherever Christ leads, He has power to light the way. 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light.'[1]

Life on Principle.

Eph. v. 15.—'See then that ye walk circumspectly.'

It is a serious thing to live as a Christian. Life, for all its commonplace exterior, is fraught for us with momentous possibilities; vast issues may depend on the manner in which we spend a single ordinary day. This is the thought in St. Paul's mind when he writes, 'See then that,' or rather, 'how ye walk circumspectly,' or, as in the Revised Version, 'Look carefully how ye walk,' which gives a somewhat easier sense. If we keep the received order, it will imply, 'Take care how you fulfil the duty of walking heedfully,' of living, as the word really means, strictly, exactly, in conformity to a plan or method.

St. Paul may have been thinking of that striking sentence in Ecclesiasticus (ii. 9), 'In my doings, in my line of action, I was exact.' When he uses the word 'exactly' he is, in effect, saying, 'Do not live at random; beware of thinking that this or that does not signify, that all scruples are morbid, that you can take life much as it comes, can follow the bent of spontaneous impulses, and trust to good feeling to keep you tolerably right.'

The inference, then, is clear that we should act and speak, not by impulse, but according to rule, that we should walk circumspectly, having certain plain fixed rules to guide us.

The Apostle does not mean that we are to make out for ourselves a set of rules, cut and dried and supposed to fit every question of

[1] James Reid.

conduct. We are to live by principles, which are deeper and larger than rules, but which will yet form a 'rule of life' for us in this sense, that, by their light, we shall know more and more clearly, in proportion to our faithfulness, what is the right line to take in this or that set of circumstances. We must carry our religion into the details of life. 'This act of mine was wrong, I must do so and so instead. I must guard this point: I must keep that temptation before me in its true colours, and steadily pass to the other side.'

¶ You have sometimes seen the top of a wall covered with mortar, and in the mortar pieces of glass stuck all the way along, so as to prevent boys from climbing and going along. You have also seen a cat walk along the top of that wall. That was walking 'circumspectly.' How it picked its way! With what carefulness it put down the foot every time. It made progress by walking very carefully, and looking for each place where the foot was to be put among those pieces of glass.[1]

1. Take the case of a man of business—if he is accustomed to deal with others as the moment itself may suggest to him, he is almost sure to take an unfair advantage from time to time, when some opportunity of doing so with no small profit to himself unexpectedly presents itself; but once let him lay down for himself as the first principle of Christian commerce that he will always act to others as he would think it fair in them to act to him if the positions were reversed, and then the wealth that he may accumulate will have no canker or rust upon it. Although we are dwelling upon the necessity of acting according to rule, rather than upon what those rules ought to be, still we might just notice that the principle laid down a moment ago, which is really the same as what St. James calls the royal law, the law of our King, constitutes the difference between heathen and Christian commerce; the former is essentially selfish, in the latter each party has to put himself in the place of the other as well as to occupy his own.

[1] G. Campbell Morgan, *The True Estimate of Life*, 169.

¶ At first Mr. Moody questioned the result his new life would have upon his business prospects. From the very beginning he had entered upon his duties with characteristic energy, and in three months' time he had sold more goods than any one of his fellow-clerks. He had thought that truthfulness might be a hindrance to his success. But he soon found that Christian principles were an aid rather than an obstacle in a successful business career. Customers, finding that they could implicitly rely on his word, preferred to deal with him, and his popularity with them steadily increased.[1]

2. Turn now to one's words, one's conversation, whether in the professional part of one's life or at home. Are we always to speak out just whatever we like, so long as it is not untrue or unclean or profane—uttering on the spur of the moment whatever flashes into our mind? Surely not. We have no right to give publicity to all our thoughts, especially as soon as they occur to us. Our words must on no account be trusted to impulse, but must be carefully regulated by certain principles—principles which, perhaps, come with less difficulty to us who belong to one of the slower-witted nations than they do to those who are keener of apprehension and prompter in speech than we are, principles which, on that account, we are all the more bound to cultivate and perfect.

The first principle that underlies the words of a man who walks circumspectly in this matter, is that of *love*. Such a man never inflicts pain unless it is necessary for him to do so. He stops himself saying clever and witty things when there is a possibility of anyone's feelings being hurt by them. He never repeats a tale that might cause unpleasantness between friends. He does not look on personalities as arguments, and never takes advantage of his chance when the man with whom he is debating lays himself open to a galling retort.

Then, secondly, there is the principle of *exact truth*, which prevents a man from ever

[1] W. R. Moody, *The Life of D. L. Moody*, 43.

seriously talking against, or in excess of, his own convictions, and leads him to avoid all exaggerated words that outrun the truth to be conveyed.

Thirdly, there is the principle of *courtesy*, which constrains him to put strict limits to the place assigned in conversation to anything which brings himself prominently forward, and mitigates his natural inclination to be positive, and leads him instinctively to make a choice of subjects not unlikely to interest those who are talking with him.

¶ One of the greatest defects is to talk too much, therefore let your conversation be little but good, little but amiable, little but sweet, little but simple, little but affectionate.[1]

3. But there is a large section of one's life, where not only principles but plain rules are needed—that is, our devotional life. Rules become necessary there because in religion more than in anything else mere impulse and guidance by emotions are to be dreaded. What would have become of most of us if all our life long we had never prayed except when we felt inclined, never gone to church except when we thought we should get some pleasure from the service or the sermon, never opened our Bible except when we had nothing else to read? All these things need a rule—a rule of daily prayer morning and evening, a rule of regular attendance at Church, regular reading of the Bible, regular reception of the Holy Communion. But as to how long our prayers are to be, how often to come to Church or to Communion, how much to read one's Bible—in all this we must walk circumspectly, having a rule, but framing it not as fools but as wise, using our Christian common-sense so that we may not burden our conscience, and so that the existence of a rule may not make its observance a mere formality.

¶ Father Faber gives the other point of view. 'Surely,' he says, 'if persons living in the world and in society wish to lead a devout life, they should not suppose that a conventual life, diluted and lowered, can be the proper fashion of spirituality for them. From their position and their duties they cannot command their own time, or break up their day into halves or quarters of hours, as if they were in a quiet cloister, and had nothing to do but to follow the chimes of an abbey clock. Hence, in nine cases out of ten, to tell such people that they must draw up a written rule and keep to it, and that the captivity of set times for spiritual drill is their only hope, is as good as telling them that persons living in modern society must not attempt to lead what is called a devout life. How many have given devotion up altogether because they have tried a rule and found they could not keep it! How many have leaned their whole weight upon fixed hours and appointed ways of doing things, upon clockwork and over-division, and have broken down because weak health, or a change of duties, or the interference of domestic vicissitudes have made their fixed hours and stereotyped ways impossible. If spirituality is made dry it will never wear. It will crack in a dozen places in a week, like the skin *poncho* of a Patagonian.'[1]

[1] Advice of St. Francis de Sales to his disciples.

[1] *The Spirit of Father Faber*, 83.

REDEEMING THE TIME.

Eph. v. 16.—'Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.'

The picture here is of a merchant searching through the market for some valuable commodity, and eagerly buying it up wherever it is found. Our Lord Himself has said that 'the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls,' and we, adopting His simile, may fitly say that the hours of every day are a string of goodly

pearls, each one to be prized and treasured for its intrinsic worth. The word rendered 'redeeming' means literally 'buying out,' but its precise significance is uncertain. It may mean 'buying up all that is in the market,' or 'buying away from,' *i.e.*, to rescue out of bad hands. In either case the general meaning is clear. Time is a priceless commodity, and the Christian must ever be on the outlook for it, resolved to turn it to the very best advantage.

I.

THE PRICELESSNESS OF TIME.

St. Paul uses the same expression in Col. iv. 5, so that it may well have been proverbial in his day. The Greeks had a profound impression of the pricelessness of time. It has been pointed out[1] that they had two words for time, one signifying 'Time viewed in its extension or succession of moments,' the other, a word which has no precise equivalent in any other language, signifying 'Time charged with opportunity, our own possession to be seized and vitalized by human energy, momentous, effectual, decisive; Time, the inert, transformed into purposeful activity.' It is the latter word (*Kairos*) that St. Paul uses here, and doubtless with full consciousness of its special significance and force. In Greek art *Kairos* is represented sometimes as a wrestler or charioteer, swift but sure in decision, sometimes as a youth pressing forward with wings on his feet and back, his hair long in front but bald behind, for he must be grasped, if at all, by the forelock. In one relief he is contrasted with Regret, who is a shrinking and dejected form standing beside an old man, symbolizing the sadness felt over the last moments which cannot be recalled.

These are reflections which have impressed themselves upon thoughtful minds in every age and nation. An ancient Persian proverb says, 'There are three things that never return, the Spent Arrow, the Spoken Word, and the Lost Opportunity.' Not less impressive is the proverb of the sleepy African, 'The dawn does not come twice to waken a man.' It is a theme of which poets and moralists are never weary.

> Youth once gone is gone:
> Deeds, let escape, are never to be done.
> Leaf-fall and grass-spring for the year; for us—
> Oh forfeit I unalterably thus
> My chance? nor two lives wait me, this to spend,
> Learning save that? Nature has time, may mend
> Mistake, she knows occasion will recur;
> Landslip or seabreach, how affects it her
> With her magnificent resources? I
> Must perish once and perish utterly.[1]

Life has frequently been represented as offering to each man a single great opportunity, a strategic moment decisive of destiny, as if life's great issues were staked upon a single throw. Shakespeare's well known lines,

> 'There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries,'

has helped to give vogue to this idea. And there is a measure of solemn truth in it, for the strategic element does enter into life, and destiny is determined by our use of the critical hour. There may come a decisive 'Now or Never,' which, if it be not grasped, leaves for ever after a bitter legacy of vain regrets.

But what must chiefly be noted is that the great opportunity must be prepared for, not simply waited for. Many wait, like Mr. Micawber, for something to turn up; many grow cynical, saying they never had a chance. The truth is that many chances have come and gone unobserved. The great opportunity does not herald its approach with sound of trumpets, but oftenest it comes as a thief in the night, sudden, stealthy, taking us unawares.

[1] S. H. Butcher, *Harvard Lecture on Greek Subjects*, 117-120.

[1] Browning, *Sordello*.

It is the prepared man who alone sees and grasps it ere it is gone. 'Everything comes to him who waits'—yes, to him who waits in readiness for its coming. The astronomer spends years of study and months of preparation for the eclipse; then he waits, and when the critical moment comes he is ready and can use it to the full. It is said of Florence Nightingale that 'she deserved her success by the thoroughness with which she prepared herself to make the best use of her opportunity.'[1] When she volunteered for service in the Crimea her letter was crossed in the post by a letter from the Secretary for War, in which he said that while many were volunteering, 'there is but one person in England that I know would be capable of organizing and superintending such a service.' So, as was inevitable, she was the chosen one.

The real difference between men is not in their chances, but in their ability to recognize their chances. Opportunities come in one form or other to every human being. It is safe to say that no man lives whose hand at some time has not been at the door of some genuine opportunity.

They often say that only once, may be,
Outside life's door, knocking with gentle hand,
The angel, Opportunity, does stand,
Just one time to give choice for destiny.
It is not true. Ah! Opportunity
Walks smiling ever up and down the land,
Filling each day and hour with meanings grand,
Asking for ears to hear and eyes to see.[2]

It is life itself that is the great opportunity. Such is the bountiful giving of the Heavenly Father that every new day brings priceless possibilities. 'As you grow older,' wrote Gladstone, 'you will find more and more how full the world and our life are of opportunity, and how impossible it is that, unless by our own fault, they should seem to present a blank.'[3] Similarly, to one who sighed for opportunities, Clara Barton, the Florence Nightingale of the American Civil War, said, 'My dear, we all tumble over opportunities for being brave and doing good at every step we take. Life is just made up of such opportunities.'[1]

And so time is priceless, not simply because the wise use of it may lead to eminence and worldly success, however true that may be, but because, in the Christian view, the opportunities of time, trivial as they seem, lead on to the solemn issues of eternity. 'Redeem the time if you would succeed,' says Worldly Wisdom, and many of her children are eager to hearken to her voice. But with infinitely more weight and urgency speaks the Wisdom of God, saying, 'Redeem the time if you would be saved.'

[1] *Life*, i. 321.
[2] J. E. Russell.
[3] *Letters on Church and Religion*, ii. 164.

II.

WASTE OF TIME.

In spite of this, in the eyes of many nothing seems of such little value as time. So far from 'redeeming the time,' they recklessly squander it as of no account. 'Words,' says Trench,[2] 'often contain a witness for great moral truths—God having impressed such a seal of truth upon language, that men are continually uttering deeper things than they know, asserting mighty principles, it may be asserting them against themselves, in words that to them may seem nothing more than the current coin of society. Thus to what grand moral purposes Bishop Butler turns the word "pastime"; how solemn the testimony which he compels the world, out of its own use of this word, to render against itself—obliging it to own that its amusements and pleasures do not really satisfy the mind; they are only "pastimes," they serve only, as the word confesses, to pass away the time, to prevent it from hanging, an intolerable burden, on men's hands.' Montaigne in his Essays draws the same testimony out of the word, and speaks with scorn of those people who 'think they

[1] *The Life of Clara Barton*, 24.
[2] *Study of Words*, 10.

cannot have a better account of their lives than to let them run out and slide away as a thing of troublesome and contemptible quality.' 'Dean Briggs, of Harvard, describes a company of American young people whom he saw in Rome. They were on their first visit to the Eternal City. Morning after morning they arose with the opportunity of a lifetime awaiting them. The Forum, the Coliseum, Saint Peter's, the whole city, fabulously rich in historical association, was at their disposal. And every day they settled down in the hotel for a long morning at bridge. Cries Dean Briggs: "What business had such people in Rome? What business had they anywhere?"'[1] One need not go to Rome to witness such criminal waste of time. What of the people whose waking thoughts circle about the card table or the ring, whose talk is all of football or tennis or golf, who read only the sporting news or, it may be, the money market, whose working day is an unwelcome interruption to the real interests of life? What business have they in God's great world? Did the Creator of all endow them so richly in body and mind, and launch them upon the adventure of life for nothing but to drift aimlessly through it?

Let there be no mistake, such waste is a grievous sin, and involves irreparable loss. As John Owen says, 'Great opportunities for service neglected, and great gifts not improved, are oftentimes the occasion of plunging the soul into great depths'—into greater depths, it may be, than active evil-doing. For this moral emptiness, this vacuity in living, this utter fruitlessness is, perhaps, of all conditions the most hopeless and accursed. It is of such that the Lord of the Vineyard says, 'Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?' Browning in 'The Statue and the Bust' tells the tale of two lovers who had not energy to grasp life's prize, and whose days ended in utter frustration and contempt, and Rudyard Kipling has poured like scorn upon the feckless Tomlinson whose life, 'ill-less, guidless,' as the Scots would say, excluded him from both heaven and hell, and swept him away like a withered leaf into the infinite emptiness.

No sin is more lightly committed than that of waste of time, as even the best of men are fain to admit. Henry Martyn, whose ambition it was to 'burn out for God,' and whose portrait, hanging in Simeon's study in Cambridge seemed continually to say, 'Be in earnest,' even he makes the mournful confession, 'When I look back on every day, I may say I have lost it. So much time mis-spent, so many opportunities lost of doing good.'[1] And Samuel Johnson, that notable toiler and economist of time, with what a world of regret does he make the birthday entry in his private diary, 'I have now spent fifty-five years in resolving, having, from the earliest time almost that I can remember, been forming schemes of a better life. I have done nothing. The need of doing, therefore, is pressing, since the time of doing is short. O God, grant me to resolve aright, and to keep my resolutions, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.'[2] What living soul is there that is not assailed by such regrets? Who can look back over the past without a dreary sense of wasted days and years? And how shall we answer for them to the Lord of Life? One who, near the end of a wasted life, had sought and found the Divine forgiveness, was asked, 'Are you afraid to die?' 'Not afraid,' he replied, 'but ashamed.'[2]

III.

REDEEMING THE TIME.

'Time is short,' 'Time flies.' 'My days,' said Job, 'are swifter than a weaver's shuttle . . . they are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.' Presently we shall awake to find them gone. So we must realize that life with all its glorious opportunities, life with all its solemn responsibilities, is upon us now. 'To-morrow will be like to-day,' writes Emerson. 'Life wastes itself whilst we are preparing to live.' Life is like the ancient Sibylline Books, which,

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character*, 7.

[1] *Life and Letters*, 40.
[2] J. Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, ii. 166.

as they diminished in quantity, increased in value, till the Roman king who had begun by refusing the whole nine was constrained to buy the last three at a far higher price. If, hitherto, we have been prodigal of our time, have wasted or idled it away, there is all the more reason why we should redeem that which is left. 'Ten years of life—five years—one year—say you have only that—will you sleep *that* away because you have already slept too long?'[1] 'The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,' cries St. Paul; which is to say, 'If up till now we have lived like heathen, surely it is high time we had begun to live like children of God.' There is an oft-quoted saying, attributed to William Penn, which expresses the mind of one who would earnestly redeem the time. 'I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good work, therefore, I can do or show to any fellow-creature, let me do it now! Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.'

Now 'redeeming the time' is not a matter of theory but is primarily a matter of practice. It implies not merely right feelings and high resolves, but the wise ordering of one's life from day to day, with the most careful supervision, in detail, of all the hours and minutes. Certain practical rules may be laid down for our guidance in carrying out the heaven-born resolve to redeem the time.

1. *Redeem the Lord's Day from profanation.*—It is well to begin at the centre. Like the settler in a new country who, finding himself surrounded by a wilderness of tangled brushwood, begins by making a little clearing round his home, and works gradually outwards till all his land is cleared, so he who would redeem his whole time for the highest uses must first redeem that sacred portion which lies at the heart of it, the Day of God. If we suffer that to be profaned, overrun by the world's wild undergrowth, it is hopeless to think of making progress anywhere.

One of the darkest signs of our time is the steady encroachment of the world upon the Lord's Day, which threatens to turn it into a moral wilderness. It is not that the things done on Sunday are wicked; they often are, in themselves, harmless enough. The sin lies in this, that they crowd out higher things. They are as weeds that fill and choke the ground where flowers of heaven were meant to bloom. Alarm has been felt about the Niagara Falls, because the waters are being diverted, a stream here and another stream there, to drive machinery, and there is a danger, if this continue, that one of the noblest works of God may be stripped of its glory, and left a bare and ugly rock. The danger to the Lord's Day is similar. We have emancipated ourselves from Jewish legalism in the observance of the Sabbath, and that is well; but it is at our peril that we rebel against the Christian observance of the Day. 'An institution which is so primitive, which is so independent of locality, which forms so natural a part of the course of time, but which, above all, has twice—in the Jewish Exile and in the passage of Judaism to Christianity—survived the abrogation and disappearance of all other forms of the religion with which it was connected, and has twice been affirmed by prophecy and practice to be an essential part of spiritual religion and the equal of social morality,—has amply proved its Divine origin and its indispensableness to man.'[1] To which the testimony of Macaulay, the historian, may be added, 'If Sunday had not been observed as a day of rest during the last three centuries, I have not the smallest doubt that we should at this moment have been a poorer and less civilized people than we are.'

The redeeming of the Lord's Day has become a national question of prime importance. Surely those who lay profaning hands upon it, claiming it for business or for worldly pleasure, 'know not what they do.' Have they considered that they are busy loosening one of the very foundation stones of our Christian civilization? Legislation cannot combat the evil; enactments by Church or State avail but

[1] F. W. Robertson.

[1] G. A. Smith, *Isaiah*, ii. 422.

little. The end will be attained only when each man suffers the deepest instincts of Nature and the Spirit of God to guide him to a restful and holy use of the Day. But let each man bear in mind that here the battle against worldliness must be turned in the gate, here, if anywhere, a stand must be made for God and the soul, otherwise all that is holiest in life will be littered over and inevitably lost.

2. *Redeem the working hours from idleness.*—It may seem unnecessary to dwell on that, for many will think that the world itself, by its rules and conditions of labour, provides a sufficient check upon idleness. But that is not so. No external rule can ever be a substitute for morality; moral government must be self-government. No amount of slave-driving can make a man a faithful and conscientious worker. If he has not the heart for his work he will find means of shirking and wasting the hours in idleness. And there is a disquieting amount of evidence to show that this spirit is widely prevalent to-day. While the thoughts of multitudes are fixed on the gaining of rights rather than the fulfilment of duties, while a sense of grievance breeds a spirit of mulish stubbornness, there is a danger lest the 'will to work' perish out of the industrial world.

If we would redeem the working hours we must remember that over all there is one Master in heaven, to whom we must look, more than to any earthly employer. Him, above all, must we serve. St. Paul enjoined upon the Christian slaves of his day that they must work 'as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.' Their economic conditions were intolerable, their remuneration nil, but that did not exempt them from the duty of redeeming the time and doing honest work for God. After all, it is not an affair of work and wages, *quid pro quo,* so many shillings for so much work, both given grudgingly; it is something far different, a question of putting conscience into our work, a question of laying out life to the best advantage in the service of God and man. Gladstone, one of the world's mightiest workers, records a youthful desire 'which at times has risen high in my soul, a fervent and a buoyant hope, that I might work an energetic work in this world, and by that work (whereof the worker is only God) I might grow into the image of the Redeemer.' And he was never weary of teaching the young that 'life is a great and noble calling; not a mean and grovelling thing that we are to shuffle through as we can, but an elevated and lofty destiny.' 'Believe me,' he said, 'when I tell you that the thrift of time will repay you in after life with a usury of profit beyond your most sanguine dreams, and that the waste of it will make you dwindle, alike in intellectual and in moral stature, beneath your darkest reckonings.'

3. *Redeem the leisure hours from frivolity.*—The problem of the wise use of leisure has come, in our time, to have an unprecedented importance. Never before have the mass of our people had so much time on their hands, never before has so big a part of life been rescued from drudgery. In former times the plea for more leisure was pressed on the ground that the workers ought to have time for self-culture, for the enjoyment of beauty and the pursuit of truth. Now that the leisure hours are won, many seem to have no conception of the right use of them, nor any sense of moral obligation attaching to them. The hours of work are under law, the hours of leisure, they think, are under no law. They are to be spent as they please, at the bidding of any whim or fancy. Here is a blissful domain where all serious thought is put away, and conscience is not entitled to intrude.

Now it is obvious that if the leisure hours of life be littered up with casual trash, it means the thrusting aside of better things. Take the case of reading. If the time devoted to it be given to worthless books, no time is left for the best. 'Remember,' says Ruskin, 'if you read this, that you cannot read that.' So is it with all the occupations of our leisure hours. We can never get away from the

responsibility of choice, and the obligation of choosing the better part. In regard to this whole matter, the word 'recreation' may fitly be our guide. It teaches that our leisure hours are intended to 'recreate,' to refresh and renew the energies of body and mind and spirit. If they are so spent as to leave the body weary and exhausted, the mind unduly excited or absorbed, the soul tarnished or debased, then they have been no blessing but a curse. On the contrary, when rightly used, how priceless are those leisure hours, when we are responsible to no earthly master, when we may throw off the yoke and be ourselves, may delight the eye with beauty and satisfy the soul with good, may breathe and live and love and play till a new heart is born within us and we recover something of the 'spirit of a little child.'

IV.

THE URGENCY OF THE TIMES.

Finally, St. Paul declares the matter to be urgent. We must redeem the time, 'because the days are evil.'

Doubtless he felt that the days were evil for him personally, immured in his Roman prison. But how nobly he redeemed these prison days by the gift of his Epistle to the Church. So Bunyan redeemed his weary years in Bedford jail by writing *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In such circumstances some of the world's finest work has been done. Out of the alembic of the evil days heroic souls have distilled the purest poetry and sacred song, like Cowper, that 'stricken deer,' or Henley, with 'head bloody but unbowed.' Her biographer writes of Michael Fairless, 'Twenty months before she died the opportunity came—as mortal sickness. To most of us it would hardly have been an opportunity. Among our writers only a few unconquerable spirits, of whom Robert Louis Stevenson perhaps is chief, have been able to overcome flesh and its hindrances by the governance of the soul, when the weight of Death's heavy hand has been laid upon them.'[1] By the grace of God it can be done, and the world is immeasurably richer by all such legacies of triumphant faith and courage.

But much more the Apostle had in view that the days were evil for the world in which he lived. Roman society was fast ripening into rottenness, and he knew that only the power of the gospel could save the world from moral ruin. It behoved every Christian, therefore, to be in dead earnest, redeeming the time.

For us also the days are evil, and the outlook is ominous. Not without cause do we fear that the cruel waters of war may again break out and submerge the whole world, that civilization may go down in a sea of blood and fire. The appeal has often been made to speed the work because

> Men die in darkness at your side
> Without a hope to cheer the tomb,

but to-day it is a question not of the perdition of individual souls, but of the perdition of the whole world. A shaken civilization is striving desperately to get on its feet again, striving desperately to build some bulwark behind which security and peace may be found. *We are building against time.* Now or never must the work be done. So the call is exceeding urgent in proportion as the crisis is imminent. The days are evil but they are big with fate, and they cry aloud to every true man to be up and doing, to cast his whole weight on the side of peace and goodwill, to 'redeem the time' and make every minute tell, even to the uttermost, for God and for humanity.

J. H. Morrison.

[1] W. S. Palmer and A. M. Haggard, *Michael Fairless*, 48.

Understanding God's Will.

Eph. v. 17.—'Wherefore be ye not unwise (RV 'foolish'), but . . . understanding (RV 'understand') what . . . the will of the Lord is.'

The word which St. Paul usese here, and which is translated 'unwise' or 'foolish,' means, properly, 'not using the mind rightly.' It does not mean a defect of the right qualities of the mind, but the incapacity, the inability, or the want of will to use the mind rightly. It means such qualities, for instance, as are seen in the untrained mind of a child, who is wilful and capricious, and wanders from the point which is of real importance to something which is of slight importance. Be ye not senseless—be ye not foolish—using the mind wrongfully, but use it for a definite purpose. There is a purpose paramount over all other purposes: 'Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.'

1. 'Understanding the will of the Lord,' said Paul. That does not mean always knowing why God is doing things. It does not necessarily mean that for the moment we always know exactly what God's will is. We may have hours in which we have to wait for that, and struggle after that. But we understand the will of the Lord.

Let Paul define his term, 'the will of the Lord.' Let us go to another of his letters, where he speaks of 'that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' The man who wrote that was one who understood the will of the Lord. The man who wrote that knew God. He was sure of God, and therefore he understood the will of the Lord; not exactly why God was doing things, or not always what God was going to do; but he understood that whatever God wills is best. In that understanding, life is surrendered to His will. The supreme passion of life is to discover it. We wait for it in the morning, we ask for it in every crisis, we put our life into line with it, because we understand. Life is governed in communion with God. No conflict! Perhaps many an hour of anguish, many an hour of having to tread thorny paths, but all the while the song in the heart, the song that Faber sang so exquisitely:

I worship thee, sweet will of God,
And all thy ways adore;
And every day I live I seem
To love thee more and more.

Ill that thou blessest turns to good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong
If it be Thy sweet will.

That is the song of a man understanding the will of the Lord.

2. The appeal is based upon our capacity for understanding God. Many years ago scientists were declaring to us quite definitely that God cannot be known. Those days have passed. No reputable scientist is telling us that to-day. He is moving out into the dim and yet wonderful mysteries that lie behind material things, and he is telling us that there is a reality behind the material, and that man will fulfil the meaning of his being only as he finds his way somehow into the knowledge of all that lies behind. That means—our Bible stands for it, the Christian religion affirms it—that we can know God, understand God, talk to God, walk with God, commune with God.

We are made for fellowship with God. The Bible interpretation of man ideally, beginning away back in Genesis, is that he was such a being that he could talk with God. Let us take our way through the Bible and notice the outstanding revelations: the idea is that man can commune with God—Abraham talking to God under the terebinths at Mamre; Moses talking to God face to face as a man talks to his friend; prophets in the midst of dark days coming out of the secret place and uttering the word that they had heard in the secret place.

'Yes,' says one, 'that is all in the Bible, but then God does not talk to men now as He talked to Abraham and to Moses.'

Is that so? May it not be more correct to say, not that God is not talking to men as He once did, but that men are not listening to God as they once listened? If we will, we can have the knowledge of God, and commune with Him, and come to an understanding of Him.

¶ Let me give you one word of personal illustration. My father—strong, rugged, glorious old Puritan—a few weeks before he died sat talking with me in my study in London, and he looked at me, and said: 'You know, as one gets to the margin things change.'

I said: 'Father, what do you mean? Tell me just what you are thinking.'

'I am thinking this,' he said; 'I am not half so sure about some things as I used to be. But,' he added, 'there is one thing I am sure of.'

'What is it?'

'God.'

Sure of God! You and I can be sure of God. We can know God and we can be sure of God if we come to Him in His own way, through Christ. If you and I know Him in Christ, then we shall come to understand Him. The light of communion will then be the way to realization.[1]

3. The revelation of the will of God is the revelation of a will that is good, and good for me. I have to prove for myself what is 'that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' The renewed mind has new faculties of discernment. There is a clear perception and appreciation of the will of God—new eyes to see it, and a new heart to do it, and to be it. We cannot know God's will until we are given up to it.

¶ Once as I meditated on these words I heard the children pass my study door, and amongst them was a little maiden of three or four, who was speaking angrily. 'I shan't,' rang out the little voice. I opened the door and called her in. 'This won't do,' said I gravely; 'you must stand in the corner until you come to a better mind.' And with a saddened face the little offender crept to the corner and set herself in the angle of the wall, and put the tiny hands behind her back, and sighed. 'Think now,' said I to myself, 'if she put on a tone half-injured and half-submissive, and should say, "Well, I suppose it is my father's will, and I must submit to it," should I not answer, amused at such mistaken meekness, "Nay little one, you are wrong. It is altogether against your father's will. Your father's will is that you should be in the garden shouting and playing with the others, as merry as you can live; but you have gone against your father's will, and now your father's will has gone against you?"'[1]

[1] G. Campbell Morgan.

Intemperance.

Eph. v. 18.—'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.'

NUMEROUS passages in the writings of St. Paul show his familiarity with the spectacle of intemperance, and also his abhorrence of the habit. It is mentioned only to be branded. In these days excess in wine is sometimes condoned as being little more than an indiscretion into which men are betrayed by genial feeling on festive occasions; the Apostle never regards it in this light, never refers to it apologetically or humorously, but invariably stigmatizes it as shameful. The gay temper of Omar Khayyám is far as the poles asunder from the spirit of St. Paul. 'They that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, since we are of the day, be sober' (1 Thess. v. 7, 8). He classes 'drunkenness, revellings, and such like' with the foulest vices (Gal. v. 21). 'I write unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat' (1 Cor. v. 11). Immediately upon this follows the admonition that drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (vi. 10). However

[1] M. G. Pearse, *Parables and Pictures*, 158.

graced by beauty, smothered by roses, lulled by flutes, ministered in golden cups, and ravished by dance and chorus, the phosphorescence of debauch did not blind the Apostle to the corruption.

1. Mazzini declared that 'every political question is rapidly becoming a social question, and every social question a religious question.' The curse of drunkenness has now become a burning *political question.* Statesmen are compelled to think seriously what can be done to check it. The Drink Trade has had time and opportunity to grow until it is now a powerful and dangerous foe to the State. We feel thankful that there are statesmen who are so free from it as to be able frankly and calmly to bring in strong measures to deal with it. Some politicians would have us believe that what this country needs above all is 'protection' against foreign commercial attack. What Great Britain is really in need of is 'protection' against the Drink Trade. Parliament has granted these drinking facilities. Parliament must control them and protect our land from the awful curse of drunkenness. We claim from the politician effective measures to check it. It is a political question.

2. But it has become *a social question.* Men of all classes interested in the work of social improvement unanimously agree that drunkenness is a greater curse than war, pestilence, and famine combined. The pernicious influences of alcoholism have hindered and hampered almost every form of enterprise for the elevation of the people. Social reformers have long since discovered that the drink problem, in all its intricate ramifications, demands a most thorough investigation. Homes are wrecked, slums are created, churches are hampered, and social advancement is hindered by alcoholism.

3. But again, this is emphatically *a religious question.* If the Church does not interest itself in what concerns humanity it cannot hope that humanity will interest itself in what concerns the Church. The Church cannot afford to allow the politician and the social reformer alone to fight this foe. Parliament can do much to protect the people from the enemy. The drink question is a political problem in one sense. But the function of the politician is not to discover great principles. He is an executive officer. Alcoholism is a social question. But social reforms will never eradicate the evil. Christianity alone can do that. The Christian problem is, How shall we cure this disease? How shall we redeem men from this sin? How shall we reform these enemies of the social order?

¶ Along the Tottenham Court Road, and to the west of it, King Alcohol dwells prosperously in his palaces. In the streets to the rear of Whitefield's there are all the characteristic evidences of his rule. In the bad old days when it was not considered 'the thing' for Churches to say anything about social politics, licences were granted by the hundred in that district and no objection offered. The 'saints' were absorbed in their devotions. They made merry, with due propriety, at their tea-parties; and they enjoyed the picturesque discourses with which their preacher regaled them. Moreover, they believed in the power of their Gospel to reclaim the poor lost victims of the saloons; and as we all know, many such were snatched as brands from the burning, and the miracle of the humanly impossible did frequently happen.

But their thoughts were on the remedy, not on the prevention of the disease. The manufactories of wastrels and criminals became yearly more numerous and more busy. Respectable streets degenerated into slums. This drink-surfeited neighbourhood possessed irresistible attraction for those who ply the filthy trade of lust, for those who make the gamester's life a profession, and for the potential criminals who see in London a city where men and women can live by their wits. All this process of demoralization went on, so far as I can learn, without any attempt on the part of the Churches to put up a fight against the multiplication of temptations. The two worlds never clashed because they

had different orbits. The Church did not trouble the world nor the world the Church. They did not think or speak much about one another, except in the vague, general phrases which break no bones, and reduce no dividends. When the temperance appeal began to be heard, it was too late. The land was held by chains of powerful block-houses; and the attempt to dislodge the enemy seemed hopeless. There was nothing for the Church member to do but to shake his head over the situation and thank God that all will be well on the other side the Jordan. That is an illustration of how evil first thrives on the apathy and negligence of those who, if we come to think of it, are organised to fight against it; and then corrupts the doctrine of the Church into a false and base other-worldliness.

The situation has not been made easier in our time by the policy of modernising the public-house, and making it more sumptuous and externally attractive. More wise than the children of light, who continue to expect tired workmen to spend their nights in badly lighted mission-rooms, sitting on stiff and straight-backed forms, surrounded by bare and often dirty walls, the brewer and distiller have associated with their tied houses all kinds of luxuries and amusements.

I question whether any Church has earned the right to denounce the public-house that has not made some sacrificial attempt to substitute something better. We know now that our negations will never give us a purer or happier society. Some contribution we are bound to make towards the healthier social order.

I wish the noble army of critics who rail at us would really face the social situation as we have to face it three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. They would agree with us more and swear at us less. One Sunday evening a young fellow who had sampled every variety of social vice was crossing the Tottenham Court Road to join some pals who were accustomed to meet outside the Apollo public-house. They were frequenters of that house, and though it was not open on Sunday evenings, they made it a rendezvous. Crowds of people were streaming into Whitefield's for the evening service. A cornet solo was being played, and the strains were heard out in the road. The friend in question was an old guardsman, and the cornet appealed to him. He told me afterwards he made several attempts to cross to the Apollo; but it was 'as if a hand was on my shoulder.' He could not go. He summed the situation up by saying it was 'pull Apollo, pull Whitefield's.' Whitefield's pulled the stronger, and he went in, and became one of the active workers. It is always like that. There must be some 'pull' against the 'pull' of the drink. Yet if the Church of to-day seeks to lessen the force of the 'pull' which the licensed houses can exert by lessening the number of those houses, all the pietists arise and cry, 'No politics.'

I despair of conveying to any reader my own sense of the gravity and urgency of this problem. If the Church is to go out of politics, you may be quite sure the public-house will not; and the public-house stands to-day for a number of selfish allied interests which stand together, and work together, and vote together.[1]

Stimulus.

Eph. v. 18.—'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.'

That is an extraordinary antithesis. The contrast would appear to be almost irrelevant. We are accustomed to oppose excessive drinking by the claims of abstinence; but here the alternative counsel is the reception of the Holy Ghost. 'Be not drunk with wine, . . . but be filled with the Spirit.' Do not try to accomplish by one way what can be attained only by another. Do not seek the stimulus of life primarily through the senses, but through the heart. The fundamental need of life is not a sensation, but an inspiration. Man has a body; he is a soul. It is folly to seek to spur the essential powers of life by a stimulus of the flesh. The stimulus must

[1] C. S. Horne, *Pulpit, Platform and Parliament*, 160.

be more inward, and must be given by the Holy Ghost in the soul. If a man wants buoyancy, power to contend with a 'sea of troubles,' and keep his head above the water; if he would be light-hearted, and have power to resist the awful, pressing weight of urgent care; if he would be optimistic, with reason that can pierce the near and frowning horizon, and realize the golden morrow beyond, the secret must be sought, not in the highways of the body, but in the deep recesses of the soul. And so the subject of the contrast expressed in the Apostle's words is this—the real stimulus of life; what is it?

The thing that the masses of men most dread is dullness—the dreary, depressing dullness of the ordinary daily round. This abhorrence and detestation of dullness, so characteristic of us all, is natural and therefore right. God surely never meant men to be dull, to find life a dreary and depressing thing. The desire for thrill, for buoyancy and uplift, is as legitimate as it is ineradicable. But there are right and wrong, wise and foolish ways of gratifying it, and this is the truth recognized by St. Paul in our text. The exhilaration men need and crave for should be spiritual, not spirituous, soul-stirring rather than sensuous. The Church, when she is in the right condition, recognizes this universal and legitimate craving of man's nature and satisfies it in the highest and Divinest way.

¶ The craving for excitement is universal, a veritable impulse of our essential nature. Creatures in all the lower ranges of life reveal this appetite. Travellers in the southern world tell of trees whose nectar puts bird and insect into a state of delightful agitation. The green and golden butterflies are for ever fluttering and quivering about the gay blossoms; and when driven away, after a moment's airy flight they return to the feast, quivering with eagerness for the limpid sweetness. The birds also become flushed with excitement. 'Every tree is a fair, and all behave accordingly, chirping and whistling, humming and buzzing, flitting and fluttering, in the unrestrained gaiety of holiday and feast-day humour.' Stimulated by the quintessence of the flowers, birds, butterflies, and bees are beside themselves with gladness. Truly 'the tenses of intoxication are infinite'; but the elevated mood is rarely so innocent as here. In some measure the whole animal world partakes of it. Savage races escape from the gloom and terror of existence by wild entertainments. Not a tribe but has discovered some kind of distillation, giving itself up periodically to liquor, dances, devil-music, and mad festivity.

Public carnival and private carouse have persisted through generations in civilized society. Israel celebrated joyous feasts, which too often degenerated into revelry. 'They lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; they chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; they drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments' (Amos vi. 4-6). History gives lurid insight into the banqueting-halls of Babylon, Egypt, and Nineveh; whilst the gross saturnalia of Greece and Rome have been depicted by the poets who glorified them and the moralists who denounced them. The North debauched itself with mead; the East dreamed its splendid dreams drugged by opium. The institutions of conviviality still flourish, and in viands more or less legitimate we become oblivious of the weight of a weary world; we hasten to see visions, to enjoy sensations, to taste delights which transcend the grey experiences of ordinary existence. As Balzac notes, 'Mankind at large is carried away by fits of intoxication.' [1]

¶ What is the meaning of the popularity of football? A Saturday afternoon 'gate' of thirty thousand people is no unusual thing at the principal centres. What is the explanation of these dense throngs? It is not found in any cold-blooded philosophical interest in the mere science of the game. The secret of its spell is the intense excitement it engenders. For vast multitudes the hour on the football

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *Moral Paradoxes of St. Paul*, 54.

field is the most thrilling hour of the week. They cheer till the roar can be heard a mile away. But what if by some magic stroke the attendant excitement could be eliminated so that watching a match would become an occupation as calm and unmoving as that of inspecting specimens in a museum? How long would men in tens of thousands continue to go? Not a month. It is the thrill and tingle of nerve they are out for, something to send the blood in a mad gallop of excitement through their veins, and football enjoys its unparalleled popularity because it does this, and so enables its devotees to forget, for a couple of glorious hours, the grey and monotonous dullness of ordinary life.[1]

¶ This constitutes the fascination of the gambler's life: money is not what he wants—were he possessed of thousands to-day he would risk them all to-morrow—but it is that, being perpetually on the brink of enormous wealth and utter ruin, he is compelled to realize at every moment the possibility of the extremes of life. Every moment is one of feeling. This, too, constitutes the charm of all those forms of life in which the gambling feeling is predominant—where a sense of skill is blended with a mixture of chance. If you ask the statesman why it is that, possessed as he is of wealth, he quits his princely home for the dark metropolis, he would reply, 'That he loves the excitement of a political existence.' It is this, too, which gives to the warrior's and the traveller's existence such peculiar reality; and it is this, in a far lower form, which stimulates the pleasure of a fashionable life—which sends the votaries of the world in a constant round from the capital to the watering-place, and from the watering-place to the capital; what they crave for is the power of feeling intensely.[2]

The Apostle names two kinds of stimulant.

1. The one is *wine:* 'Be not drunk with wine.' This is the active principle and outstanding characteristic of wine and other alcoholic beverages. They are commonly and accurately spoken of as stimulants. That, distinctively, is what they are. Reaction and corresponding depression there is, of course; but the first and most conspicuous effect of alcohol upon the system is to elevate and exhilarate.

¶ I once heard a man say, as he glanced at the clock hanging on the workshop wall, 'Half-past four! In three more hours I hope to be gloriously drunk.' It was not a grim jest. He was looking forward to the intoxicated condition with ardent desire and ill-repressed impatience. It is easy to see why. It does not take much of the potent spirit to make a man feel equal to springing over a five-barred gate. People without experience of it speak of the reeling sot as 'top-heavy,' and as having 'got more than he can carry.' The truth is the exact reverse of this. He is not top-heavy, but top-light; it is the steadying ballast that, for the time being, he has succeeded in flinging overboard. He reels, as an empty ship reels, from excessive lightness. And the public-house is, with quite diabolical ingenuity, specially designed to augment this effect of the liquor sold in it. Many things can be quite truly said of the public-house. You can say, if you will, that it is low, bestial, vulgar, ruinous, and the like. But no one can say with truth that it is a dull place. Its note is brightness. Everywhere there is a superabundance of light and warmth and cheeriness. Its special design is to make its votaries forget, for a time, that there is such a thing as dullness on earth.[1]

2. The other stimulant is *the possession of the Spirit.* St. Paul recognizes the truth of human nature. He does not attempt to uproot the instinct so deeply implanted and universally active; he does not deny needs and longings which so vividly assert themselves; he opens up a sphere for the legitimate satisfaction of a long misunderstood and misdirected passion. For the unclean cup of sorcery he substitutes a sacramental chalice. It is instructive to recall how the spectators of Pentecost thought they discerned in the

[1] H. Davenport.
[2] F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 3rd Series, 115.

excited disciples the phenomena of intoxication. 'And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine. But Peter lifted up his voice, saying, These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel' (Acts ii. 12-16). A new order of fellowship, eloquence, mirthfulness, rapture was being inaugurated. Whilst the primal impulse to ecstatic emotion, speech and joyfulness was legitimate and sublime, the method of its gratification had hitherto been, as a rule, false as hell; but at length the secret of true zest and rapture was being revealed in the unction of the Holy One. 'They are filled with new wine.' How false as intended, and yet substantially how true! Wine still, only new wine. Henceforth men need not be mocked with wine in which was surfeit, with all its attendant disillusionment and degradation; in the 'wine of the kingdom,' in the gifts, powers, inspirations, and sanctifications of the Holy Spirit, they would find all, and infinitely more than all, vainly sought in Bacchanalian excess.

¶ During the revival in South Wales, a book-maker went to see a sporting friend in another town on a Sunday. He was a terror to his wife through drink. But he could not find his friend. The town seemed to be deserted. There was a deep silence over it which made the man feel uneasy. He could not see anyone except the porter at the station. He asked him if he had seen his friend. The porter answered that he had not. The man explained that he had come from the next valley by train, but could not find his friend at home, nor could he see anybody about the streets. The porter told him that he would find the people at the revival meetings. The book-maker went to the large chapel a few streets away, and there he found, as the porter had told him, hundreds of people. There was a huge crowd outside, unable to get in. He learnt that his friend was inside. When the service was over they met. The friend was so happy and exhilarated that the book-maker declared he would like to go to the next service. 'We must go two hours before the time of the service,' said his friend, 'or we shall not be able to get seats.' Both went and found a crowd in the streets going also. They got inside. The book-maker forgot about the last train, and it was midnight when he left the chapel. He had to walk over the mountain home. When he knocked at the door his wife trembled, for she only expected to see him drunk, and fierce, and cruel. She had seen him coming home many a time long after midnight like a beast. She went timidly to open the door for him. But when she saw him smiling and speaking kindly it puzzled her. He acted rather strangely. He gathered all his betting slips and sporting papers, and piled them on the fire. And turning to his wife he said, for the first time since they were married, 'My dear!' He then told her where he had been, what he had felt, and that he was going to be a different man. They both went on their knees, and in a few broken words he confessed his sins and asked God for mercy. On the Sunday following they went to a service in a chapel, and gave themselves to God's people. That is the difference between the effects of wine and the exhilaration of the Spirit. Ever since that happy day this man, who was 'filled with the Spirit,' is singing and making melody in his heart to the Lord.[1]

Passion and Power.

Eph. v. 18.—'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.'

THAT rendering of the word 'excess,' says Dr. Vaughan, is much too thin; it is the same word which describes the conduct of the prodigal son in the far country, when, while he had still money to spend, and before that mighty famine arose which at last brought him to himself, he wasted his substance in riotous living. It is the same word, and the true rendering would be 'debauchery' or 'profligacy.'

[1] J. M. Morgan.

It would be difficult to translate these words into the idiom of modern speech without shocking the feelings of all who have a regard for sacred things. The only connection we can trace between a particular degrading and often disgusting vice and religion is the inconsistency of the one with the other.

Startling as the antithesis of drunkenness and religion is, there is something common to both things which is the very ground of their contrast. It was this outward likeness between these sharply contrasted things that struck the casual onlooker on the Day of Pentecost, when the disciples were taunted with being filled with new wine.

The outward signs were similar; great gaiety of spirit, exhilaration of life, a sense of power beyond one's control, freedom, and incoherence of speech as of images too crowded to find expression in words. Yet for all their likeness they are the antithesis of one another as vice is to virtue, summer to winter, black to white. A mountain is different from a mouse, but it is not contrary, for there is nothing common between them. But a mole hill is the contrary of a mountain in that they are opposite extremes of the same thing.

So with drunkenness and religion. In their extremer forms both are characterized by intensity of feeling, a sense of elation, fullness of life, ecstasy of being. The one is sensual, produced by stimulation of the senses: the other is spiritual, produced by the kindling of the spiritual nature, the one answering to the animal in man, the other answering to the angel in man.

During the war a grateful patient said of the nurses that they were angels sent by God; and a patriotic, warm-hearted nurse who watched the battered and broken men being brought in said the men were all heroes. A wise doctor with long experience corrected these unqualified tributes by saying, 'Not every nurse is an angel nor every man a hero. But there is an angel in every nurse and a hero in every man.' And how near the hero is to the coward, and how like the angel in man is like to the devil in man, only the heroes and the angels in all of us really know.

The border-line between the sensual and the spiritual is difficult to draw, though the one can drag the soul into hell and the other can lift the soul into heaven. Who can say where righteous anger passes into murderous hate, where the loftiest patriotism becomes a dangerous jingoism, where faith becomes fanaticism, where liberty becomes licence, where love passes into lust? A modern psychologist who has confined himself too narrowly to one kind of phenomena, and these of a very abnormal type, conscious of the very intimate connection and likeness between things so opposite, seeks to explain the highest expression of religious emotion as being nothing more than the perversion of the sex instinct. It is just as scientific to interpret the lower in terms of the higher as the higher in terms of the lower, and much more reasonable.

Science may trace the evolution of man's physical structure through the striking similarities between him and the anthropoid ape, but that which constitutes the essential manhood of man is not his remarkable likeness to, but his much more remarkable difference from, the ape. Their likeness is the ground and measure of their difference. So with the fruits of the Spirit, and the lusts of the flesh. What is religion at its highest but the sublimation of the natural instincts, if it be true that man was made in the Divine image?

Years ago now, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, in one of the most evangelical sermons he ever preached, startled his hearers and, when the words were afterwards taken out of their context, shocked many of his readers, by saying that the drunkard, the roué, the profligate walking along Piccadilly, was seeking God; by which he meant, as he went on to explain, that he was seeking life, seeking it through a perverted yet Divine instinct, seeking for what he believed would enlarge the boundaries of existence, but which by being perverted to low desire turned to his ruin instead of to his salvation. He was seeking life along the deathward road.

What is this urge of the Spirit towards a fuller and more abundant life, and how are we to distinguish the sensual from the spiritual? In two ways; by their roots and by their fruits.

1. *By their roots.*—Sensual excitement depends upon the stimulation of the senses from without. The source of its life is the external world of sight, of sound, of feeling. Let any of the faculties by which it can lay hold upon this world of outward phenomena be impaired, and life itself suffers contraction and diminution.

Then imagination has to be excited by such artificial stimulation of nerve power as modern chemistry can supply, and drink and dope are called in to re-create a world of illusion in place of the real world of living, loving, striving, and suffering men and women, whose dreams are not the result of fumes and vapours prepared in the druggist's shop or the brewer's vat, but are of the stuff that is one with the spirit of man and have their beginnings and endings in God.

The life that is lived in dependence upon the Spirit is a life that proceeds from within. It cannot be cut off from the sources of its joy. Its faculties are sharpened, not deadened, by use. Sow to the flesh and you reap corruption. Sow to the spirit and you reap eternal life. Sensuality is short-lived: spirituality belongs to the ageless life.

2. *By their fruits.*—Both the sensual and the spiritual spring out of a God-given impulse which ever impels man towards fullness of life. Judged by this test, which offers to us the promise of fullness in respect both of the life that now is and of that which is to be, which offers intensity of feeling, depth and fullness of life, joy and lasting satisfaction of being, the spiritual life has no rival; and the only possible comparison of the life lived in the flesh and the life lived in the spirit is one of completest contrast.

The sensual life does not even enjoy the world in which it moves and has its being. It is blind to most of its glories, deaf to most of its harmonies; its feeling for joy and happiness is a dulled and drugged thing. Much has been made of the gorgeous imaginativeness of a Coleridge or a De Quincey, stimulated by drugs to excess of creative fancy, of the oratory of statesmen and the bravery of soldiers whose eloquence has been kindled and whose courage has been stimulated by drug or spirit. Against this set the moral greatness of a John Bright or a Gladstone, whose gift of speech was the vehicle of the Divine spirit that enables men to speak not with tongues as angels, but in tones of living men whose lips have been touched by the fire from off God's altar. By the side of Coleridge place a more brilliant poet and singer, Francis Thompson, whose full powers never had free scope until he had been delivered from a habit which threatened his brilliant gifts with total destruction. And if the winning of life's greatest battles depended more upon the artificial stimulation of the senses (which modern science proves to be but the narcotising of the brain controls) than upon the vision of right and the passion of freedom which have stirred nations to great sacrifices, the map and make of this world would be very different to-day from what it is.

For sheer joy of living, for fullness of life and intensity of the highest rapture the human spirit knows, religion can outbid a Godless world every time. To those who are always denouncing religion as a kill-joy, and to those whose religion appears sometimes to merit the description, we commend the fact that joy is one of the first fruits of the Spirit.

But religion does not end in feeling, nor does it feed upon sensation. It has thrills and raptures the flesh knows nothing of. It moves to action or else it overflows and breaks through the barriers of ordered speech and conventional life. It is like love: it moves towards a goal, as love issues in marriage.

But marriage is love's act, not merely its ecstasy. It means that what began in feeling issued in faith and ended in love; love that is creative of life, of beauty, of happiness, of peace. So Pentecost was not only the kindling of a new spiritual passion, but the outpouring

of a new spiritual power. Even love runs to waste that does not issue in service and sacrifice.

To be filled with the Spirit is to be in partnership with God: with every flower that blows, every bird that sings and every heart that loves. It is to be what men said Spinoza was—a God-intoxicated man. It is going all out for God, for Christ, for humanity, to the help of the cause that needs assistance against the wrong that lacks resistance, and the bringing of the love and beauty and splendour of God into the lives of men. Wherefore, be filled with the Spirit, till God is all and in all.[1]

The Spirit in Fullness.

Eph. v. 18.—'Be filled with the Spirit.'

St. Paul, who preached to the nations the gospel of Christ, proclaimed also the gospel of the Holy Spirit. The two are one. They may be distinguished, but they should never be separated; they supplement and illuminate one another. Through Christ we know God, through the Spirit we know Christ. The gospel of Christ brings the message which alone can save the world, but only through the Spirit do we understand it and make it our own. A doctrine of God without Christ is a face without an eye; a doctrine of Christ without the Holy Spirit is a body without hand, or a body possessing hands and arms complete, but without life to quicken them and energy to move them. The Apostle who cries out in holy passion, 'Though an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than this, let him be anathema!' declares also that 'none can say that Jesus is Lord but in the Holy Spirit,' and 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.'

In the Epistle to the Ephesians there are many references to the Spirit. Two of them are direct commands, and in these commands all our duty to the Spirit is included. The one is, 'Grieve not the holy Spirit of God' (iv. 30). The other is our text: 'Be filled with the Spirit.' The one is negative, forbidding everything of the flesh or self that would lead to unbelief or disobedience to Christ Jesus. The other is positive, calling us to yield our whole being in undivided surrender to Him who reveals and maintains the life of Christ within us.

To understand the command, 'Be filled with the Spirit,' we need only turn to the Day of Pentecost, when the disciples were all 'filled with the Holy Spirit.' We know what that meant to them. For three years they had lived day and night in closest fellowship with their Lord. His presence had been everything to them. When He spoke of His departure their hearts were sad. He promised that the Spirit would come, not to take His place, but to reveal Himself as their Lord, present with them as much as when He was upon earth, only far more intimately and more gloriously. He would henceforth not be near them and beside them, without the power of enabling them to do what He had taught them, but would live and work in them, even as the Father had lived and worked in Him as man. To be filled with the Spirit would mean to them that Christ on the throne would be to them an ever-present living reality, filling their hearts and life with all His heavenly love and joy. Their fellowship with Him on earth would prove to have been but the shadow of that intense and unceasing union with Him which the Spirit would reveal in power.

The command, 'Be filled with the Spirit,' is a pledge that all that the disciples received and enjoyed at Pentecost is, indeed, for us too. The Church has sunk down from the level of Pentecost to a life in which the Spirit of the world and of human wisdom is, alas, far too prevalent. Few believe in the possibility of the unbroken presence of Christ dwelling in the heart, conquering sin by His holy Presence, inspiring to devotion and perfect self-sacrifice by the fire of His love, guiding by the leading of His blessed Spirit. The heavenly vision of Christ at the right hand of God, ministering, in the power of His infinite

[1] E. J. Barson.

redemption, not only salvation to the penitent, but full salvation to all whom He has sanctified by His one offering, is scarcely known. And, as the result of this, there are but few found to witness to 'the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.'

What are the conditions of the Spirit's fullness?

1. *Surrender.*—In all filling we know that two things are needed. The one, that the vessel be clean and empty and ready, even in its posture, to receive the water that is waiting for it; the other, that the water be near and ready to give itself away in full measure to the waiting vessel. In the great transaction between God and man for the filling of the Spirit, man needs first of all to know how complete is the surrender that is needed, and how, even to the death to self and the world, the yielding up of the whole being is indispensable. Then how willing, ready, and able the Holy God is to take possession of our being, and to fill it with Himself.

¶ Miss Royden met a lady who had left the Church of England and joined the Quakers, seeking by this change to intensify her spiritual experience, seeking to make faith a deep personal reality in her life. This lady told Miss Royden the following experience:

One day, at a Quakers' meeting, she had earnestly 'besieged the Throne of Grace' during the silence of prayer, imploring God to manifest Himself to her spirit. So earnestly did she 'besiege the Throne of Grace' in this silent intercession of soul that at last she was physically exhausted and could frame no further words of entreaty. At that moment she heard a voice in her soul, and this voice said to her, 'Yes, I have something to say to you, *when you stop your shouting.*'

From this experience Miss Royden learned to see the tremendous difference between physical and spiritual silence. She cultivated, with the peace of soul which is the atmosphere of surrender and dependence, silence of spirit; and out of this silence came a faith against which the gates of hell could not prevail; and out of that faith, winged by her earliest sympathy with all suffering and all sorrow, came a desire to give herself up to the service of God. She had found the secret, she could use the power.[1]

2. *Faith.*—It is through faith in Christ and in the Father that the Divine fullness will flow into us. Of the same Ephesians to whom the command is given, 'Be filled with the Spirit,' Paul had said, 'In Christ . . . having . . . believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise.' The command refers to what they had already received: the fountain was within them; it had only to be opened up and way made for it; it would then spring up and fill their being. And yet not as if this were in their own power. Jesus had said, 'He that believth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' The fullness of the Spirit is so truly in Jesus, the receiving out of Him must so really be in the unbroken continuity of a real life-fellowship, the ceaseless inflow of the sap from Him, the living Vine, must so distinctly be met by the ceaseless recipiency of a simple faith, that the upspringing of the fountain within can only be in the dependence on Jesus above.

3. *Prayer.*—For faith in Jesus and hourly and ever-growing upspringing of the Spirit will not dispense with faith in the Father's special gift and prayer for the renewed fulfilment of His promise. For these same Ephesians, who had thus the Spirit within them as the earnest of their inheritance, Paul prays to the Father 'that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.' The verbs both denote not a work, but an act, something done at once. The expression 'according to the riches of his glory' indicates something which is to be a great exhibition of the Divine love and power, something very special and Divine. They had the Spirit indwelling. He prayed for them that the direct interposition of the Father might give them such mighty

[1] *Painted Windows*, by A Gentleman with a Duster, 105.

workings of the Spirit, such a fullness of the Spirit, that the indwelling of Christ, and a life in the love that passeth knowledge, and a being filled with the fullness of God, might be their blessed personal experience. When the flood came of old, the windows of heaven and the fountains of the great deep were opened together. It is still so in the fulfilment of the promise of the Spirit: 'I will pour . . . floods upon the dry ground.' The deeper and clearer the faith in the Indwelling Spirit, and the simpler the waiting on Him, the more abundant will be the renewed down-coming of the Spirit from the heart of the Father direct to the heart of His waiting child.

¶ It was one Saturday afternoon in March, 1882, that two young men were ushered into his study, whose minds had recently been opened to spiritual truths. In the course of conversation on these subjects, the text, 'Be filled with the Spirit,' was quoted by one of them. It may have been a bow drawn at a venture like the one that slew Ahab, but it came winged with Divine power, and it brought life, not death, in its train. It was God's two-edged sword, dividing asunder between soul and spirit, and reaching even to the thoughts and intents of his heart. Long after his visitors had left he sat absorbed in meditation over that Word. What did it mean? Was it a command to every Christian to be filled with the Holy Ghost? If so, how could it be obeyed? He excused himself from the family circle, and hour after hour on his knees pleaded with an intense and passionate longing that God would teach him what it meant to be filled with the Spirit, and do for him what he could not possibly do for himself. Long into the night did he thus seek. At last the answer came, and the Presence of God so filled him and the room that the frail physical frame could bear no more. He had to entreat the Lord to stay His hand. The dawn was breaking when Mr. Paynter left that place with a new joy, and with a radiance on his face that has often been noticed since. The change was almost as great as when, in his early boyhood, he first opened his heart to the Lord.[1]

¶ The saint enjoys the fullness of rapture. History records that Alexander the Great offered a prize to the man who could drink most wine, and that thirty candidates died in the process of the competition. No matter how we may drain the cup of earthly indulgence, we still expire unsatisfied. No snatch of sensual ecstasy, no throb of worldly joy, no dream of power or glow of success can fill the spaciousness of the soul. 'Be ye filled with the Spirit.' As the heaven is filled with light, as ocean's rocky cup is brimmed with the shining tides, so does the Spirit of God pervade the infinity of the soul, and every true believer expresses the sparkle of the sky, the music of the sea. The reason alleged for the rejection of religion is that we want life in its fullness. Precisely what the faith of Christ gives.[2]

The Spirit-filled Life.

Eph. v. 18.—'Be filled with the Spirit.'

1. The Spirit-filled life is *a life of conquest over temptation.* The three Gospels which record the temptation of Jesus emphasize its connection with His baptism. Matthew says, 'Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.' Mark says, 'And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts.' Luke says, 'And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days, being tempted of the devil.'

The exposure to temptation is the deliberate act of the Spirit. God does not keep His saints in cotton wool. The Spirit thrust forth Christ to His testing. Satan tempts to seduce, God tests that He may prove. In the

[1] *Life Radiant: Memorials of the Life of the Rev. Francis Paynter*, 68.

[2] W. L. Watkinson, *Moral Paradoxes of St. Paul*, 66.

temptation of Job God seems to retire from the scene of conflict, but the Spirit was with Jesus through all the forty days. He led Him in and led Him through. The presence of the Spirit is manifest in the discernment of the evil in the devil's appeals, in the answers that met the assault, and in the power of resistance. The proposals looked innocent, devout, and reasonable enough, but the Spirit laid bare the bait and supplied the answers. The Spirit that exposed Him secured His complete and abundant triumph.

¶ The word temptation means test, and in its original application it refers to whatever draws out, and brings to the surface, the contents of the inner self. It reveals the ruling bent of one's disposition and life. Primarily it did not refer to any solicitation to wickedness. That application of the word belongs to a later period in its history, and is the one now commonly accepted. If a test can bring out what is good in us, and show its strength or its weakness, it can also bring out what is evil, for both are within us. And so the word temptation has, in the long course of its usage, come to signify mainly those testings and trials of character which are designed to draw out the evil that is in us, rather than those which are adapted to our characteristic weaknesses, or are likely to evoke and develop into exercise the better qualities of our nature. It is because of this twofold meaning of the word that we meet in Scripture with such apparently contradictory sentences as these: 'lead us not into temptation,' and 'count it all joy when ye fall into different temptations.' God tries us; Satan tempts us; and our wills and hearts are the spheres in which both seek to work. It never is God's purpose by the trials which He sends us to bring out and confirm the evil that is in us, rather is it to lessen and destroy it by calling out the good and giving it the command of life. God winnows us to get rid of the chaff; Satan allures us to get rid of the wheat.

Temptation is a necessity; it is the normal condition of manhood in its struggle for moral existence. It may therefore become a means of the most abiding good, inasmuch as it reveals a man to himself, and discloses where his weakness lies. When a man sees himself he is almost certain to see God; when he faces the dangers of his character, he will quickly turn to the help of God. It is unmanly not to accept this testing of human life just as we find it, and it is shameful cowardice not to make the most and the best of ourselves amidst its difficulties. We should become moral invertebrates if we had no temptations to face and conquer. It is only by resistance to evil that goodness is matured and strengthened. There can be no right-doing without the possibility of wrong-doing. The limpet clings to the rocks in spite of the ceaseless smiting of the waves. It clings all the more firmly when the buffeting is heaviest. The defences of the soul are always strongest in proportion to the evil which it has resisted. No man was ever worth much, either to his fellows or to God, who did not pass through some severely testing ordeals. A peach will grow in your summer-house; the oak needs the hill-side and the storms. The sailor best proves his skill and courage in the gale, and the good soldier is not made in times of peace. There is an imperishable nobleness in the stories of the early martyrs—sensitive men and tender women—who went unfalteringly into the arena or the dungeon rather than yield to the temptation to deny their Master, or be false to their faith. The paganism of that day was startled into admiration by their victorious courage. Their resistance to evil showed the secret of their strength.[1]

2. The Spirit-filled life is *a life of service.* 'And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and a fame went out concerning him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up.' The baptism of the Spirit is a call and equipment for service. It is still necessary to emphasize the elementary truth that we are saved to serve. Many Christians are but half-pagans. They have a pagan conception of God, a pagan

[1] W. Watson, *A Young Man's Ideal*, 110.

idea of religion, and they live a pagan life labelled with Christian names. To some, religion is a luxury. Worship must be smooth, soft and soothing, that their senses may be lulled and gratified. Truth must excite the intellect, and Church organization yield to their whims and flatter their vanity. To others, religion is a penance. It is a system of self-mortification for the good of the soul. They fill up their programme with self-imposed crosses, denying themselves all pleasant things, and forcing themselves to do disagreeable things that their own righteousness may be established. To many, religion is an investment seeking a return with interest in this life or the next. Christianity is not for self-indulgence, not for self-mortification, not for self-interest, but for service. Everything in the work of the Spirit is preparatory and subservient to the ministry of the Kingdom of Christ.

¶ One whose life has been changed by him, and who is now changing others in a remarkable manner, describes the theory of F.B. in the following way: 'There are two seas in Palestine, one in the north teeming with life—fish, fruit, crops, birds, flowers, life of all kinds. In the south is the Dead Sea—no fish, no fruit, no flowers, no houses, no life of any kind. What is the reason for the difference? The Sea of Galilee has a river flowing into it, and a river flowing out of it. The Dead Sea has the same river flowing into it, but none flowing out.'

It is a good figure. Science and philosophy will not quarrel with it. A mind which receives and gives is a Sea of Galilee; a mind which receives, but gives nothing out, is a Dead Sea. It is a law of our nature that we enrich ourselves by sharing with others the accumulations of our activities, be they intellectual or material. The miser of wealth or knowledge punishes no man so heavily as himself.[1]

3. The Spirit-filled life is *a life full of joy*. 'Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.' 'Be not drunken with wine wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit: speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.' 'The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy.' He floods the soul with light and gladness and praise. The Spirit-filled sing and give thanks to God. Their joy springs up from within their souls, a perpetual fountain shimmering with light. They carry with them a refreshing and infectious gladness, and an abiding consciousness of peace.

What is the Spirit's secret of perpetual gladness? The Spirit makes men glad with the consciousness of God. The soul sees God. When they stoned Stephen, 'he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.' He rejoiced in the exalted Christ, and the ultimate triumph of His cause. Men shout at the sight of their King. The Spirit-filled live in a vision of the opened heavens, and that is why they rejoice amid the tumults of earth.

¶ What impressed the representatives of the press at the international gathering of the Salvation Army was the singing faces of the people. One of them thought he had got at the secret of their happiness in an incident that was not in the programme. Standing on the main staircase of the hall, he saw a Salvationist coming up with a small boy in a red jersey beside him. The boy fell. When he was lifted to his feet tears were in his eyes and a woeful look on his face. Taking hold of his hand the father said, 'Don't cry laddie, say Alleluia!' The lad looked up through his tears and said, 'A-A-Alleluia, F-F-Father,' and went smiling into the hall. The press-man argued that if the religion of these people made them say Alleluia! through their tears, it was no wonder they were happy. And he was right.[1]

[1] H. Begbie, *Life Changers*, 49.

[1] S. Chadwick, *Humanity and God*, 232ff.

Vocal Therapy.

Eph. v. 18, 19.—'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.'

In two of his letters the Apostle Paul recommends the ministry of singing to his fellow-Christians. It is not, perhaps, the sort of counsel we should expect from this robust and intellectual Apostle. We scarcely imagine the gift of song as part of our conception of his marvellous equipment. We do not think of him singing as he climbs from the Cilician plains into the cold, biting air of the Taurus mountains. But why not? It is probable that we get very much nearer to a true image of the man if we think of him toiling along his exacting roads in the mood of song. The man who broke into singing at midnight in the prison of Philippi, when a few hours before he had been beaten with Roman thongs, has a very active sort of minstrelsy in his soul, and it would wake into music at the lightest touch of events.

At any rate, he strongly urges the use of singing as one of the inspiring helps in the spiritual life. In his letter to the Ephesians he recommends it as a substitute for wine! 'Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit . . . singing and making melody in your hearts.' He counsels his readers to seek their stimulus not through the body, but through the spirit, not by the quickening of the flesh, but by the exaltation of the soul. If they seek spiritual stimulus they will have less need of material stimulant; the more of song, the less of wine! And who has not known the inspiration of song? Who has not known the stale flatness of some depressing scene lifted away by the ministry of song?

> Sometimes a light surprises
> The Christian *while he sings.*

Yes, and when the light breaks upon the soul, like some shaft of sunshine breaking through on a cloudy day, the bird is apt to sing all the more, with the result that twilight passes into glorious day.

The Apostle Paul makes a second reference to this precious ministry in his letter to the Colossians, where he teaches that counsel and even admonition can be best conveyed 'in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.' There is something very attractive about this sort of admonition, but one does not often meet it. The Apostle seems to suggest that a soul must be touched to sweetest harmonies before it is fitted to administer reproof. All our own discords must be removed before we are competent to create concord in the soul of another. For what can there be that is truly healing and creative in any word which is born in a heart that is 'like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh'? But if a soul is full of harmonies, singing with grace unto the Lord, even its admonitions find a ready entrance into the lives of others, and are ministers of health and healing.

Those whom we call experts in the devotional life are almost in perfect agreement as to the helpful ministry of singing in their devotions. What riches of singing there are in the Psalms! 'I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord'; 'I will sing aloud of thy mercy.' William Law insists that even in private devotion the Psalms should always be sung. 'For singing is as much the proper use of a psalm as devout supplication is the proper form of prayer; and a psalm only read is very much like a prayer that is only looked over.' There is nothing that so 'awakes all that is good and holy within you, calling your spirits to their proper duty, setting you in your best posture towards heaven, and tuning all the powers of your soul to worship and adoration.' And this testimony of William Law is corroborated in the experience of multitudes of saints.

Sir Frederick Mott gave an admirable lecture some time ago to a society which bears the attractive name of 'The Vocal Therapy Society.' He told a fascinating story of how music is now being used in the ministry of healing. At the Maudesley Hospital it has

passed far beyond the experimental stage, and is in confident and constant practice. It is being used in nervous disorders, and in restoring mental powers to ex-Service men. The distracted consciousness is being led back into unity and peace. Lost memory is being recovered. The holy, healing Spirit of God is brooding over the stricken spirits of men and is restoring their broken estate through the seductive and mollifying ministry of music and song.

Is this a neglected gift in the aspiring life of the soul? It may be that just here many a one will find the magic secret which gives wings to leaden feet and changes weariness into strength. And perhaps it would be best to try the secret when we do not feel like trying it at all. How can we sing the songs of Zion in a strange land? Ah, that is just the place wherein to sing them! They give an amazing lift to the exiled spirit, and they bring the air and fragrance of home to streets and ways on foreign shores.[1]

Praise.

Eph. v. 19.—'Speaking to yourselves (RV 'one to another') in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.'

Praise had its place, then, from the very first in Christian worship. We have here St. Paul's directions to the Ephesian Church to speak to themselves, or rather to one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; and in Pliny's famous letter to the Emperor Trajan we are told how Christians used to meet in the early morning and chant together to Christ as to a God. It is from St. Luke that we obtain the *Benedictus* and the *Nunc Dimittis* and the *Magnificat*. And it is quite remarkable what prominence St. Paul in his Epistle gives to Christian praise. His letters to the Churches, with but one exception, all commence with an emphatic giving of thanks.

In times of strong and developing religious feeling men have been and always are inclined to the use of congregational singing. In the great and solemn periods of religious reformation there have ever been new developments of Christian song. In the times of Luther, for instance, or even under the government of Calvin, singing became so general in its use that 'Psalm-singing' and the 'Protestant Heresy,' became synonymous terms. In the period of the revival of religious life in England under the Wesleys one great mark of the movement was the stimulus that was given to the writing of expressive and emotional hymns, and to the outburst of Christian song. In the experience of to-day we may notice that whenever a period of religious revival dawns upon a community, its presence is invariably marked by a new zeal for singing.

1. In the Christian Church at Ephesus St. Paul encourages the use of music as a natural vent for emotion, and especially for the outflowing of the soul's thanksgiving to God. He calls in the use of psalms, of hymns, and of the spiritual ode or song. Of these varied forms of musical expression the psalms and hymns may be very easily distinguished and understood.

(1) The *psalm*, as the word itself implies, is vocal music with an instrumental accompaniment. Such psalmody was, of course, prominent in the old Temple worship. Speaking of the Apostolic age, Bishop Lightfoot says: 'Psalmody and Hymnody were highly developed in the religious services of the Jews at this time.' It is significant that in the first instance we have of Apostolic worship (Acts iv. 24) the Old Testament Psalms have a place of chief prominence. From that time they have had their use in the forms of Christian worship and praise.

¶ Dr. Neale has quoted from St. Chrysostom a glowing passage on the use of the Psalms: 'If we keep vigil in the Church, David comes first, last, and midst. If early in the morning we seek for the melody of hymns, first, last, and midst is David again. If we are occupied with the funeral solemnities of the departed, or if virgins sit at home and spin, David is first, last, and midst. O marvellous wonder! Many who have made but little progress in

[1] J. H. Jowett, *Life in the Heights*, 127.

literature, nay, have scarcely mastered its first principles, know the Psalter by heart. . . . In monasteries, among those holy choirs of angelic services, David is first, midst, and last. In the convents of the virgins, where are the bands of them that imitate Mary; in the deserts, where are men crucified to this world, and having their conversation with God, first, midst, and last is David! Others sleep at night, but David is active: congregating the servants of God into seraphic bands he turns earth into heaven, and converts men into angels.'[1]

(2) The *hymn* is purely vocal music joined in by a whole company. When our Lord and His Apostles, at the close of the Last Supper, 'had sung a hymn,' they went out to the Mount of Olives. Paul and Silas, in the prison-house at Philippi, were 'praying and singing hymns unto God' when their prison doors were opened. The hymn was especially directed to the praise of God, but it was probably also the vehicle of the new utterances of the Christian Church itself, and was expressive, not only of feeling, but of mind.

(3) The explanation of the *spiritual song*, or *ode*, is more difficult. By some it has been supposed merely to include the psalms and hymns. But it may be safely declared that the Apostle's words in these passages make the ode to be co-ordinate with the psalm and the hymn, and therefore distinct from them. It may be conjectured from the use of the word 'song' or 'ode' in lyric poetry that the term here used may describe elaborate and varied music, sung to words by one person only. Dr. Lightfoot again quotes a passage from Philo, descriptive of the Jewish sacred music of this period—'He who stands up,' he says, 'Sings a hymn composed in praise to God, EITHER HAVING MADE A NEW ONE HIMSELF, or using an ancient one, of the poet of days gone by.' The counterpart of this in the Christian Church might be the spiritual song, which in so early an age became the original of our expressive and uplifting solo.

[1] W. A. Whitworth, *Worship in the Christian Church*, 147.

2. The text puts before us two different ways in which our praise may be regarded, two uses which it has as part of our Divine worship: 'speaking to ourselves' and 'making melody in our heart to God.'

(1) In 'speaking to ourselves,' we speak not only each member of the congregation to himself, but to each other, and all to each. We speak 'to ourselves,' rousing our sluggish thoughts and devotions, stirring ourselves to heartier praise, to more earnest and trusting prayer. We speak 'to each other' with the speech that most goes home to the hearts of men, the pouring forth together of the feeling that glows in the heart of each, and which thus makes all one.

(2) But St. Paul teaches us that we may not only be speaking 'to ourselves and each other,' we may also be 'singing and making music in our heart to the Lord.' Here are two sides of all common worship: fellowship with each other, fellowship with God. Our voices speak to ourselves and each other. Our hearts speak to God: in them is the singing and music-making which enters into His ears.

We may sometimes be touched by a hymn or a tune, and yet not be touched towards God. It may have seemed to melt us, and yet have done nothing towards making us more steadfast in good, more resolved to crush our darling sins. But when the music is truly such as befits the house of God and the service of God, and when a congregation finds in it the fitting voice for its thoughts, then it is indeed a 'singing to the Lord.' And all true singing of hymns must have in it somewhat of praise: some remembrance of the cross of Christ and of the great triumph in which that ends. That which then rises to the throne of God is, in its measure, like the voice that St. John heard in the Revelation: 'And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.'

¶ It was a fixed principle with Frances Ridley Havergal never to sing any song in whatever company she might be unless it would honour her Saviour Jesus Christ, and in that

respect, as in all others, she would then be faithful to her Consecration hymn, one verse of which says—

> Take my voice, and let me sing
> Always, only, for my King.
> Take my lips, and let them be
> Filled with messages from Thee.

On one occasion, when on a visit to London, she had accepted an invitation to an amateur musical evening, and among the friends assembled was an Italian lady with whose finished singing the whole company was very much impressed. When she had ended her song Miss Havergal was asked to the piano. This proved no small trial to her under the circumstances. She was under a religious vow, and the company was not likely to sympathise much with her. But, true to her high resolve, she sang a piece from Handel, which, greatly to her surprise, gratified the audience. She was then requested to sing one of her own pieces. This she did, and selected the one on the words of St. Peter in his last Epistle—'Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet, believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' The piece was rendered with the fervour and joy of true discipleship, and it made a deep impression on the whole company. The rooms were hushed, and then the Italian stranger who had sung with such sweetness and finesse, came with tears in her eyes, and said to her, 'Miss Havergal, I envy you; your words and face tell me you have something I have not.'[1]

Music.

Eph. v. 19.—'Speaking to yourselves (RV 'one to another') in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.'

THE relations between music and worship have always been in some form acknowledged. Not only have they been associated through custom in every land, but the imaginative thinkers of the ancient and the modern world have been strangely at one in recognizing that these two principles were married in the beginning of things. Plutarch says of the doctrine of the music of the spheres that it was accepted by all the Greek philosophers 'for the universe, the span, was framed and constituted by its author on the principle of music.' This reminds us of Carlyle's saying, 'All inmost things are melodious. See deep enough, and you see musically; the heart of Nature being musical.' If music were not buried deep in the universe, we should not be able to bring it out of the universe. We cannot get out of Nature what is not in it. In melody, though in silence, the earth was born; the morning stars still sing together though we cannot hear them; and in the vision that closes the Bible we find that the new heavens and the new earth float before the prophet's eye as in a sea of music, in which the redeemed sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and strike mystic harps to the glory of the Redeemer.

If we turn from the world without to the world within us, we find the same principle planted far down in our nature. The deeper thoughts and feelings of our hearts naturally utter themselves in song. Music touches and stirs emotions that can be awakened in their fullness in no other way. If a man has a divine thought to utter it shapes itself spontaneously into poetic form, and though he may be writing what is called prose, it will be 'prose-poetry,' full of haunting rhythm and cadence, if his thought be but true and deep enough. Even the voice becomes unconsciously melodious and musical when we utter our best thoughts and feelings; and our songs, oratorios, and instruments of music are but so many contrivances for the more perfect embodiment of the voiceless harmonies that haunt our souls.

¶ St. Paul's injunction to his converts in Ephesians, that they should use 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord', finds many a parallel in the lives of the mystics, for whom music is ever a spiritual thing, an apt symbol of the harmonies which fill the

[1] H. Livesey, *The Silver Vein of Truth*, 71.

universe. 'As the work of the husbandman is the ploughshare, and the work of the steersman is the guidance of the ship,' says the early Christian poet, 'so also my work is the psalm of the Lord. . . . For my love is the Lord, and therefore will I sing unto him.' The servants of the Lord are His minstrels, said Francis of Assisi, and the ideal Franciscan is the lark. The 'sweet melody of spirit' often possessed him and he urged the duty of song on all the world. Rose of Lima sang duets with the birds, Teresa sang of her love as she swept the convent corridors, Rolle found mystic truth a 'sweet ghostly song' and declared that the souls of the perfect no longer pray but sing. Nor is this concept of divine melody, and the soul's necessary participation in it, confined to Christian mysticism. It seems to be one of the primal forms assumed by spirit's tendency to Spirit, the self's passion for its Source, Home and Love; and is found as well in the East as in the West, in the modern as in the ancient World.[1]

¶ When thou commandest me to sing it seems that my heart would break with pride; and I look to thy face, and tears come to my eyes.

All that is harsh and dissonant in my life melts into one sweet harmony—and my adoration spreads wings like a glad bird on its flight across the sea.

I know thou takest pleasure in my singing. I know that only as a singer I come before thy presence.

I touch by the edge of the far spreading wing of my song thy feet which I could never aspire to reach.

Drunk with the joy of singing I forget myself and call thee friend who art my lord.[2]

1. Thus praise is *natural and childlike;* it is wholly healthful; there is in it nothing morbid. The words of penitence are taught us in hours of storm and stress. Praise, on the other hand, is the instinctive language of the human heart as, in the gladness of recovered sonship, it rejoices in a Heavenly Father's love.

¶ St. Francis of Assisi, who loved all creation with a brother's love, has left to us the Song of the Creatures, as it is called. These are his words: 'Praised be our Lord,' he says, 'by our sister the Moon, and the Stars, and by our brother the Wind, and by our sister the Water, for she is very humble, pure and precious, and by our brother the Fire, robust and jocund, beautiful and strong, and by our mother the Earth, and by our sister,' he adds, very solemnly, and speaking out of the fiery furnace of his sufferings, 'our sister, the death of the body.'

St. Brendan, that Ulysses amongst monks, sailed westwards over the Atlantic wave, and found upon an island far away fair companies of snow-white birds, who clapped their wings each eventide, and sang in antiphonal chorus: 'Thou, O God, art praised in Zion, and unto thee shall the vow be performed in Jerusalem.' 'And always,' says the chronicler, 'they repeated that verse for an hour, and their melody, and the clapping of their wings, was like music, that drew tears by its sweetness.'[1]

2. Praise is *unselfish.* Our very prayers are selfish, in that they ask a blessing, but praise looks out from self to God. The eye is no longer centred upon self at all; it gazes heavenward; it gives God praise.

3. Praise is *union.* We are reinforced in our own power to praise God when we find it echoed, or rather multiplied, in the combined praise of a great congregation. We lose our sense of separateness when we sing; that middle wall of partition between man and man falls to the ground like the walls of Jericho at the sound of the trumpets of Israel—nay, fades away magically like frost pictures at the touch of the morning sun. Music always unites those who sing together; by its very nature it necessitates co-operation, obedience to a common law, the entire repres-

[1] Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystic Way*, 189.
[2] Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali*, 2.

[1] W. D. Bushell.

sion of self except as a factor in the production of a great common harmony. And because religion aims to do in the spiritual sphere what music for the time accomplishes in the physical, music is one of the handmaids of religion, and the church that eschews music, or fails to make a right use of it, is sure to be a cold and stunted member of the Body of Christ.

¶ In the Life of the great Quaker statesman, the illustrious John Bright, we are told that one day in the Reform Club he was talking to a friend of his favourite hymns, and then and there was drawn to recite them, and that the heartfelt conviction which inspired the utterance, drew one and then another to the spot, until at last there was a circle round him, of all creeds or none, but listening spellbound, with, it may be, something of an unaccustomed reverence.[1]

Good Reasons for Gratitude.

Eph. v. 20.—'Giving thanks always for all things unto God and (RV 'even') the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

In these words St. Paul describes the attitude in which the Christian stands towards creation, and justifies it. The Christian refers all things in their manifold fullness, in their bewildering perplexity, in their unintelligible conflicts, to Him who is All-sovereign and All-loving, at once God and Father. Baffled, it may be, at every point by imperfect knowledge, and saddened by present failure, he gives thanks for the sight of a Divine counsel which passes understanding. For he sees life in the light of the birth and death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he sees it transfigured. In that revelation he finds disclosed the spiritual foundation of the world, and the spiritual destiny of the world. In that revelation he beholds the eternal, which he can henceforward trace through the brief labours of men and the larger movements of societies and nations. He does not indeed dissemble the disappointments by which his own hopes are often thwarted. He does not forget the clouds and darkness which often hide the nearer goal. But he has in his faith that which becomes to him in calm moments a spring of gratitude and a pledge of victory. He looks back over the years and over the ages, and with a true human heart, wrung though it be by untold griefs and conscious of innumerable sins, he gives 'thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God even the Father.'

1. The truth and grace of Jesus Christ make thankfulness possible by convincing us of our true position before God. Ingratitude, in the main, arises out of infinite and inveterate conceit. Wonderful as this world is, we cherish a secret conviction that we deserve one a great deal better. In the sense of our vast importance we despise most things. Satisfied that we are worthy of the greatest of God's gifts, we really appreciate none. Here the truth of the gospel effects a fundamental change; it convinces us that we are sinners, without merits and rights, and in doing this it gives us a new standpoint whence we view the whole field of life.

Said Jacob on the day that his conscience awoke and he knew himself to be guilty of insincerity, covetousness, and fraud, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant'; and men can never appreciate the riches of life until they have stood where Jacob did on that memorable day, conscious of his folly and sin, and thus perceiving every blessing to be a mercy, a sparing mercy.

2. Christ makes the habit of thankfulness possible by assuring us that the painful things of life serve equally with the brightest. 'In everything give thanks.' The 'all things' must not be limited to agreeable things. The doctrine of thankfulness must be wide enough to take in all the sons and daughters of sorrow and disadvantage. Such, indeed, is the teaching of the New Testament. It affirms that the adversities of life serve the highest

[1] W. D. Bushell.

ends equally with the golden gifts of fortune. 'Everything has His love in it, upon or below the surface.' Pearls present many shades of colour; but the most valuable of these gems are said to be the black ones which are occasionally found. So it is with human life: the dark events are not less pearls than are the white, rosy, and golden things of our prosperity; and we may well believe also that sometimes the black pearls are the most precious. Thus is it possible for us rationally to give thanks always in all things. 'The noble army of martyrs praise Thee.'

¶ Says John Davis, the Indian missionary, for sixteen years a leper and now dying of leprosy: Don't think me unhappy. My little room shines with the glory of an Invisible Presence, and my heart with the abiding fullness of the joy of God.

I had said, Lord let me be Thy servant, filled with Thy Spirit, giving all my thought, all my energy and my life to Thee.' And He answered. Instead of letting me serve Him as I had planned to do, He suddenly took me away from the work forever. As I lay in the hospital in England, and especially when the first horror of the final outcome was upon me, I thought sometimes that the Lord had forgotten and forsaken me, that He had hidden His face from me; but it was not so. The more sorrow that I have had to bear the easier it has become, and now I am rejoicing in my Saviour every hour.

You ask how I am. I have lost my eyesight now and my voice; no feet and ankles, and no arms; but my heart is far from dead. I have no doubt in these days, and if I had my voice I should be singing all the day long.[1]

3. Christ makes thankfulness possible through restoring to us the spiritual faculty by which we discern the greatness and sweetness of all things. The more intellectual men are, the more vividly do they appreciate the aspects of Nature, even those which are most obscure. A rare faculty enables them to discern the glory hidden from the multitude. Solomon 'spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.' Everybody saw the cedar; it required Solomon to do justice to the despised weed in the crannied wall. When Linnæus visited England and for the first time saw the gorse in blossom, he was overwhelmed by the sight, and falling on his knees glorified God. Kew Gardens will hardly kindle ordinary souls, but the wild plant of the common threw the great naturalist into ecstasy. Darwin wrote a delightful book on the earthworm. Most people avoid the lowly creature as 'a dirty thing'; yet one of the greatest men of his generation perceived the wonderful character and magnificent work of the despised creature and became its poet-laureate. Ruskin wrote a lovely volume on *The Ethics of the Dust*, discovering the marvellous virtues and the glorious poetry of the clods of the valley. Genius shows itself and its transcendence by discerning the grandeur, romance, and joy of all things great or small.

The Spirit of Christ creates in us a faculty of spiritual appreciation corresponding to genius in the mental realm. He endows with the vision, sensibility, and power which enable us richly to enjoy. 'To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.' He bestows that purity of heart, that profound insight into God's gifts and ways, that alertness and responsiveness of spirit, which enable His disciples to see what other men do not see, and to realize in all things the eternal faithfulness and love which constitute the essential glory and blessedness of life. They possess the strange gift that Solomon, Linnæus, Darwin, and Ruskin possessed in the intellectual world, and they do not need large and extraordinary things to provoke their wonder and gratitude. They find rapture in the Master's face, and the crumbs which fall from His table are bread enough and to spare.

Lord, I on every day
With grateful heart would say,
'Thy truths are sure and beautiful;
How can my life grow dull?'

[1] *The Dawn*, August 15th, 1925, p. 238.

And when I eat and drink,
I joyfully would think,
That all Thou hast created good
May be a wise man's food.

And as I work and trade,
Pay others and am paid,
'Knowledge,' I'll say, 'we must not cease
To exchange, and so increase.'

And when I hear the crowd
In busy traffic loud,
I'll cry, 'How sweet would be the sound,
Were all but brothers found!'

And when my friends at night
Count my return delight,
I'll think how pleased my God will be
His child in heaven to see. [1]

Mutual Submission.

Eph. v. 21.—'Submitting (RV 'subjecting') yourselves one to another in the fear of God (RV 'Christ').'

THIS is the starting-point from which St. Paul proceeds to declare the several duties of Christians according to their different places. This is right for one and all. Every duty which anyone owes to anyone else contains within it some submission. We must make up our minds to that before we can do a single thing as we ought to do it.

'Submitting yourselves one to another.' It is a hard saying in every way: not altogether easy to understand, and with a not very inviting sound about it, so far as we can understand it. But, if we have any real honest acquaintance either with the Bible or with our own hearts, we must have found out by this time that no wisdom which is come at lightly is worth very much. Most sayings worth remembering and cherishing are hard sayings at first. The most helpful for the press and work of life are those which have cost us some effort of brain to understand, some effort of will to practise.

[1] Thomas T. Lynch.

The example of Christ Himself is the beginning of the whole lesson. 'Jesus knowing,' says John, 'that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God'—did what? Proved His Divine Majesty by lording it over His disciples? No; by doing for them the lowest menial office. He 'laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.' Was He here giving up His place above them, refusing to be any more their Master? No. He said to them in the very plainest words, 'Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.' Mark well His meaning. It was not in spite of His being their Lord and Master that He washed their feet, out of mere unnecessary condescension, but because He was their Lord and Master. He wanted to show them what lordship and mastership really is. He wanted them to understand that no man is a lord or master for his own sake only, but also for the sake of those over whom he is lord and master.

The doctrine thus not only taught but practised by the Lord of us all stands fast in all cases without any exception. There is a true service due from the parent to the child, from the husband to the wife, from the master to the servant, from the teacher to the taught. We may wonder, if we please: but it is clear Christian doctrine. 'This is the difference,' wrote Jerome, 'between heathen rulers and Christian rulers, that heathen rulers lord it over their subjects, while we are their servants, and when we make ourselves least of all, then are we greatest.' 'To be subject to them who are subject to us, this,' he says, 'is to imitate the apostle.'

1. *Parents and children.*—Nothing goes down to the foundation like this. Whatever we are, we belong to families. Be our positions as shifting as may be, whether we be

neighbours, masters and servants, or what, nothing can destroy our place in our families. We did not make it, and we cannot cast it off.

Now we might truly say that both parents and children are selfish. Some love is there: but there is selfish as well as unselfish love. A parent who will not go on making sacrifices for a child, a child who thinks of its parent only as a giver of good things, is on the way to destroy the bond altogether. But this is not enough to say. Both stop short at low and natural beginnings.

(1) Take the child first. As its own powers and knowledge and sense of strength increase, it wants to have its own way; it will use its parent when convenient, not otherwise. It thinks itself as good as anybody and rebels against restraint. The truth is that all childhood is only a much more important infancy. Everyone sees that an infant's body must have food found for it by others, that it must be carried and its limbs at last taught to move. Everyone sees that if it were not under its parents it must die. What children (and others) do not see is that this goes on afterwards. They are blind to mind and character, which can grow healthily only when under another. Obedience is a virtue in a child: out of that every good thing comes in due time. Without it all grows awry. The will of a living being whom we love and who loves us, above us, and therefore calling forth reverence, is the one possible guide.

(2) But parents forget it almost as much. If the child is fed and clothed and housed and perhaps schooled, they think they may leave the rest to chance. They forget that care and loving and wise use of power are now needed more than ever. In becoming parents they have incurred a most solemn duty. God will call them to account whether they have gone on seeking the child's good—its highest and lasting good, not its pleasure: that, of course, may be included, but never if it be against its welfare. There is a double selfishness—of indulgence, and of cruelty. Let the child be without authority over it, that is like letting it fall into the fire. Let parents use their authority for their own temper or comfort or advantage, that is a shameful abuse of power. While compelling children's obedience, parents have yet to serve them; to submit to many a sore trial for their sake: to see that they do not corrupt them by their bad example. The work is that of God, ungrudging, unceasing, sure of reward. Yet is reward not lacking, the reward of answering love. To parents is given the moulding of a child of God: can there be greater joy than when the heavenly likeness grows in him more and more?

¶ In one of the galleries of Florence there is a painting of the Virgin by Correggio. The infant Christ is lying on the floor with His eyes gazing wistfully upwards. The mother, on her knees, is bending over Him. Her heart can be read in her face. Love and wonder, gratitude and adoration are all mingled there, and the mother's joy is tremulous with a mother's hopes and anxieties. Without something of this reverence the children will be poorly fathered and mothered. There is little chance of your training them well, unless you feel the preciousness and grandeur of your charge. You are sure to blunder, you will be without the delicacy of touch that is needed; you will lack the best stimulus to thoughtfulness and prayerfulness. You will be robbed of one of the most powerful means of developing the Christ-life of your children—the conviction that is wrought in their young hearts of the worth of their life by the reverence of father and mother.[1]

2. *Husbands and wives.*—Here, too, we start from the order of God's appointment. We owe our own birth to marriage: it is God's will that we should most of us by marriage leave behind those who shall carry on His work upon earth when we have been gathered to our fathers. It is by His will also that most of us should by marriage be joined into households, and live a life which should teach us that we were not meant to be alone, and that we are most ourselves when we are most together. The great thing, then, is for us to

[1] D. M. Ross.

understand clearly what is required of us by that wonderful thing which we call marriage; to know and to fulfil the duties which cannot be neglected without bringing disorder into our lives and the lives of all about us.

(1) St. Paul begins with the plain, common language about submission. 'Wives,' he says, 'submit yourselves unto your own husbands.' That was certainly not a new kind of teaching. Ever since mankind began, the strong husband had been compelling the weak wife to obey him. It was what we might call the natural order of things, what happened almost as a matter of course wherever the wife's cunning did not try to get the better of the husband's strength. St. Paul had a new lesson to teach, but he does not begin by oversetting the old lesson. He believed that the husband is the head of the wife, as surely as he believed that Christ is the head of the Church. He believed it to be part of God's unchanged and unchangeable order that in some important ways the husband should be over the wife, and have a right to her obedience. He could not see anything mean or dishonourable in obeying; he thought that we all are happiest and best when we obey whoever has a right to command us; and he held fast to the old doctrine that God meant the husband to take the lead and the wife to follow.

(2) But by far the greater part of St. Paul's teaching is addressed to husbands, and concerns their duties. When he said, 'Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God,' he had husbands in view as well as wives. He meant that husbands find their true work and their true delight in living for their wives, or, in other words, in serving them. The shape in which he puts this counsel of his is a simple one, yet it goes very far and very deep. 'Husbands, love your wives,' he says, 'even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.' Was there any need that he should say it? Shall we say that he was in fact commanding that which all men do already without being commanded? Think how he puts to shame the flimsy, idle, barren love for which we often take credit, by pointing to the love of Christ for His Church as the true example. How often does a man fancy he loves his wife only because he likes to have her with him to make things comfortable for him, and to save him trouble! Set that sort of love against Christ's. Think what sort of love He showed to men, when He stooped to suffering and death for their sakes. His love came forth in that which He gave up, that which He endured for the sake of His earthly bride. Can that be a true Christian marriage where this willing laying down of self and selfish ease is a thing strange and unknown?

¶ It is absurd to speak as if St. Paul were, in this passage, mainly emphasizing the subjection of the woman, whether this be done from the conservative side, 'to keep women in their place'; or from the point of view of those who desire her emancipation, in order to represent St. Paul, and so Christianity as a whole, as giving to women a servile position. Over against the subjection of women he sets, and indeed gives more space to emphasize, the self-sacrifice and service which is due to her from the man. You cannot tear the one from the other. Like St. Peter, so St. Paul would have the husband give honour to the wife—as to the weaker vessel indeed, but also as 'joint-heirs of the grace of life.' In essential spiritual value men and women are equal. In Christ is neither male nor female. St. Chrysostom rightly bases on this passage a powerful appeal to husbands to overcome their selfishness in their relation to their wives. There is nothing servile in the subordination required of the woman. If the husband is the head of the wife, the head of the husband is Christ, and the head of Christ is God. Christ even is subordinate. And the character of the headship of the husband altogether excludes the idea that women are to be married in order to serve men's selfish interests or gratify their passions.[1]

¶ When we read the words, 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord,' our first impression is that we are only listening to one of the many assertions

[1] C. Gore, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 219.

by which Eastern despotism proclaims the authority of the male over the female. But as we read on our view is entirely altered. We find that the meaning given to the word 'submission' is no longer Eastern or even Roman. When we are told that the husband is the head of the wife, 'even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the saviour of the body,' we are confronted not by an intensification, but by a limitation, of marital authority. Remember what, to Paul, the headship of Christ is; it is in the most literal sense the saving of the body. It is a reign, no doubt, over the members, but it is not a reign after the analogy of kinghood. It is in its deepest essence a priesthood of suffering. It is a mastership over the members which is reached by taking their pains, a pre-eminence which is achieved by accepting the lowest room. It is this, and nothing else than this, that Paul recognizes as the ideal type of marital authority. He offers it to the Gentile world as the extreme opposite of Eastern despotism. Preserving in words the ancient relation, it is yet in reality the reversal of that relation. As long as the husband was the king, the life of the wife was subservient to his own; but when he became the head, his own life became subservient. That this is Paul's view, it is from the passage before us impossible to doubt. 'Husbands, love your wives,' he says, 'even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.' For almost the first time in the history of the world the man in the matrimonial contract stands forth as the sacrificial party—sacrificial by reason of his manhood, subservient on account of his headship. He is to the members of the household what Christ is to the members of the Church—the centre of all the nerves and therefore the bearer of all the pain.[1]

3. *Brothers and sisters.*—Being brothers and sisters is no choice of our own. It comes of God's order. Every child after the eldest is born brother or sister. To have the same parents to obey, honour, and love teaches better than aught else what it is to share alike in one and the same good. These are some of the outward things which lead brothers and sisters to care for each other. Within there is the affection implanted by God, the wonderful drawings together by common blood on which higher and stronger bonds may be formed. The struggle between the good and the evil is always hard, till we make mutual submission the rule between brothers and sisters as between parents and children, husbands and wives. Parents should teach the lesson by practice, should lead children to follow it towards each other, so preparing them for practising it in the world at large. Then is the lesson easily learnt, helped by the feeling that others care for us exactly as we care for them. Later this brotherhood comes to embrace the whole family, old and young alike. Round the fireside of the father's house the power lives and grows which is most heavenly on earth, which most prepares hearts and minds for the Father's home above. All precious virtues are first born there; all dealings with men are right according as they have been learned by home affections.

¶ It was Charles Lamb himself who dedicated one of his books to his afflicted sister, for whose sake he had made many a heavy sacrifice. 'When people are living together day by day,' he says, 'they are too apt to take for granted the affection they bear each other, and to forget those special expressions of affection that are the gauge of its true and constant depth.' And so he takes occasion to pay, in the dedication, that tribute of attachment which is liable to be overlooked in the bustle of the routine life. If he could be so chivalrous to one whose recurring malady brought him such distress, there is scarcely any domestic relationship in which you cannot bear yourself with magnanimous consideration to those with whom you live.[1]

4. *Masters and servants.*—There are other people in the world besides our own relatives. We come across them in many ways. What

[1] G. Matheson, *Spiritual Development of St. Paul*, 80.

[1] R. E. Welsh, *Man to Man*, 21.

is to rule our dealings with them? We came to understand family duties by observing our places in God's order as fixed by our birth. Can we find anything like this order regarding people who are not our relatives? An order, whether God's or not, we certainly find, and we are born into it. We are born in a position which requires us to be above or below, or perhaps both at once. Sometimes, not often, we can change it for ourselves, but the order holds for most of us. Are we to call it an order of God? Certainly we find abundant evils connected with this order. But that does not of itself show much. God certainly made the relationship of parents and children, of husbands and wives, of brothers and sisters. And yet we find bad parents and children, bad husbands and wives, bad brothers and sisters. Why not also bad servants and masters without thereby service or mastership being bad? It may be that this may be changed and improved. But it is hard to see how it could help springing up again, if the relationship were for a time destroyed. For ourselves, whether masters or servants or both, the thing is here. We most need to learn how to think and act about it. St. Paul, we find, treats it as part of God's order, like the family. He found good in it; let us try to follow his good.

(1) St. Paul begins with the clear fact which all saw. Service is a fact, and one not to be rebelled against. Christ's law said that servants were meant to obey. It is not bad for them, it is no degradation, it is only doing what the Lord of all has fixed for them. Servants are to look at service as a religious duty rendered as to Christ, a duty done in singleness of heart, not with eye-service. They are to do it as doing the will of God from the heart. They are to be just and true and cheerful and willing.

(2) On the other hand, see how strongly the duty of masters is laid down. Masters are to 'do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening,' in the knowledge that their 'Master also is in heaven,' and that there is no 'respect of persons with him.' They too have to submit in the fear of Christ. The service done to themselves is not to swallow up their care for the good of those who render it. They must consider the servants' fair rights, their feelings, their sacred selves.

In old times servants were slaves; their service was mostly one of compulsion. Now they serve for hire, and in the modern system there is fairness; yet there is the risk of money coming into consideration. There might be real brotherly sympathy even under slavery. Often we find the most unbrotherly passions without it; as when a master thinks that he owes only wages, and the servant thinks that he owes only that for which his wages are directly given. No! it is not our own bargains that fix our duties. We cannot be masters and servants without entering God's order and taking the consequences. That order is full of duties which can never be too well fulfilled. It is full also of blessings which sweeten and enrich life. Whatever we owe to others we owe most clearly to those who serve us, or whom we serve. We cannot wholly fix on them the affection of blood, but we can fix what we have learnt thereby. Can we not feel that our responsibility to them is great, both alike being officers in Christ's Kingdom? The reward of the faithful servant is, 'Enter thou into the joy of thy lord'; the reward of the faithful master is, 'Inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me.'

¶ His new employer was a Christian of long standing and mature piety. . . . His interest in my father soon became intimately deep, the more so as 'the things of the Spirit' lay very close to the hearts of them both. Many an evening, when the stress and bustle of the day's work was over, master and servant would stand together in the deserted shop, the open Bible near at hand, talking over its profounder truths. My father gratefully acknowledges the enriching influence which these conversations, coupled with what he saw and felt of the power of a living Christianity in his employer's life and character, exerted upon him. To Thomas Pickworth he undoubtedly owed as large a debt as one human being can

owe to another—a deeper and more appreciative insight into 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.'[1]

¶ 'How am I to know if I am converted, Mr. Moody?' said the awakened lady to the American Evangelist. 'Ask your servants,' was his apt reply.[2]

The Body.

Eph. v. 23.—'He is the saviour of the body.'

1. A FAIR test of the various schools of opinion which are claiming to instruct us on the highest of all questions is this: What place do they assign to the bodily part of man? It is so easy, on the one hand, to make too much of the physical life, to regard ourselves as essentially a growth of Nature, immersed in the animal life of the globe, dominated wholly by its conditions, and fitted, therefore, to share, we may presume, in its destinies. It is, on the other hand, so natural for a religion which, being a religion, must protest against this materialistic teaching that men are like the beasts that perish—it is so like religion in making that protest to go to the other extreme, and to overlook our close connection with the physical life of the globe; so to be ashamed of it, so to place man's highest hope in a stern subjection to his fleshly desires. And between these two extremes the pendulum of human thought, and of practice too, has never ceased to oscillate since first men began to speculate upon their own position upon this earth.

Now one cannot fail to notice the place that is given to the body in Scripture. Our text is only one of many passages which arrest us with this unusual emphasis. Of all the books in the world's literature there is none which insists upon the soul so urgently; yet is there no book in the world's literature which has done so much to dignify the body. One of the errors of popular evangelism is that it thinks of nothing but the soul. That, too, was one of the errors of monasticism, and indeed ultimately proved its overthrow. It was false to the noble proportions of the Bible, and tried to spurn what Scripture never spurns; and in the long run it had to pay for that by being swept into oblivion. It is extraordinary how many people want to be a little wiser than the Bible. It is extraordinary how many people want to be a little more spiritual than Christ. They take the part and treat it as the whole; they are blind to everything except the spirit; they never seem to have caught the flash of glory that the Bible has cast upon the body. 'We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for . . . . the redemption of our body.' 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?' 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' Such words, and they might be multiplied by ten, are not at all impertinent intrusions. They are inwrought into the web of Scripture, and they are part and parcel of its message; until at last, by such recurrent whispers, and by a hundred other hints and shadowings, we come to see that the Word of God in Christ is the true charter of the human body.

Yet on what soil, and amid what surroundings, was it that this Scripture doctrine on the subject grew up, this marvellously well poised and reasonable doctrine? It grew up on Asiatic soil; and in Asia men may be said to have incessantly swung betwixt the most extreme positions on this subject, between the bestial idolatry of their own physical nature and a frantic effort to rid themselves of their physical part altogether. The Nature-worship of Asia in the midst of which the Hebrews lived, the worship of the fecund earth and the sun that quickens it, springs out of a too keen sense of man's participation in the animal, of that animal life of Nature that we see for ever propagating and renewing itself. Think what obscene objects of adoration and what shameless forms of worship this exaggeration of the physical life produced, till outraged decency itself revolted against worship, and the very land was ready to vomit out its inhabitants. Now, would it have been

[1] H. Varley, *Henry Varley's Life-Story*, 22.
[2] G. W. E. Russell, *Edward King*, 214.

at all surprising, when the children of Israel were planted among a people that were seething with the conception of man and his relation to Nature—would it have been surprising if, in their grim fight against such abominations, bound at all risks to inculcate a purer morality and a more spiritual faith, the Hebrew prophets had done as all other great teachers and reformers have done—swung right off to the opposite extreme, preaching the inherent evil of the flesh, and summoning men to an ascetic contempt for all kind of animal enjoyment, if they would be pure and holy? So have done the powerful religious philosophies of India. They have striven to save men, they have been ascetic, and their aim has been, not to provide a saviour for the body, but to save man from his body, and restore him to the pure realm of spirit. Thus it was with the idealism of Zoroaster, the transmigration of Brahminism, the Nirvana of Buddha, the old sects of the Essenes, the Gnostics, the Manichæans, and other forms of religious thought that have sprung out of that home of religion, the far East.

The gospel may be said to constitute a new virtue, the virtue of bodily holiness—that just and reverent use of one's own and other people's bodies as the redeemed members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost which is quite familiar to the Christian religion, and is a direct outcome of Christian teaching. How did the gospel of Jesus work that change? How did it lift the body from the mire, and crown it with glory and with honour? What are the new facts, what the doctrine, which have given to the body such high dignity that we may say of Christ unhesitatingly, He is the Saviour of the body?

1. The first is the great fact of the Incarnation. It is the coming of the Son of God in human form. The Son of God dwelt in a human body, and that has clothed it for ever with nobility. If the Son of God has tabernacled here—if perfect purity and love have dwelt here—if the immortal King has stooped to earth and taken to Himself the seed of Abraham, then the body never can be despised again. It was that fact which altered the world's standpoint and cast a glory on the human frame. The body had been the instrument of sin; now it was made the instrument of Christ. Through human lips the voice of God had spoken. Through human eyes the pity of God had looked. The love of God had wrought through human hands, and gone its errands upon human feet.

The whole series of wonderful events which began with the Annunciation was a practical vindication of the truth that matter is good, not evil; that man's material constitution is not a contemptible thing, a thing to be ashamed of and got rid of, but is a worthy vehicle for the very noblest, the very purest type of spiritual life. That was a holy thing that was born of the Virgin's womb. It was a human nature redeemed indeed from its stains, restored to its innocence, and become thereby fit shrine for Deity—although on its physical side it was feeble with the feebleness of a wailing babe.

Can anyone despise infancy after that, or think meanly of human nature? The eternal Father, whom we picture as surrounded by pure spirits, looked down, well pleased, not only on the infant in the cradle, but on the handicraftsman of Nazareth, on the itinerant preacher of Galilee, on the agonized petitioner of Gethsemane, on the martyr at Golgotha. Thereby He showed that poverty is not despicable; no, nor toil; no, nor tears, nor strong cries in need, nor pangs of dying anguish. O rare endorsement of man's humiliation! O sweet sufficiency of the Son of God! which forbids us to think meanly of any sufferer, or to grow ashamed of human nature, even in its utmost extremity and helplessness and despair.

¶ There is a house in Stratford built of common brick, not differing outwardly from other houses, yet in that home the poet Shakespeare lived, and to it thousands of pilgrims turn their feet. There is a cottage in Ayrshire, just an 'auld clay biggin,' meanly built, low-roofed, confined and damp, yet in the fullness of the time Burns was born there, and

it is not a mean place to Scotland now. And I know a church in one of our Scottish cities, and a very dreary and dingy pile it is, and yet to multitudes it is a holy place because it was the sanctuary of McCheyne. It is the genius who adorns the house. It is the saint who glorifies the dwelling. Wherever the home has been of one we love, there for ever is a hallowed spot. And when we think of all we owe to Christ, when He became poor for our enriching, it helps us to realize a little better how His coming has glorified the body.[1]

2. The second factor in this change of view was the compassionate care of Jesus for the body. There is no part or organ, no faculty or sense or limb, but has a share in that redeeming work which brought our Saviour from the throne to Calvary. Christ refused to interfere when one wanted Him to interpose about his property. 'Master, speak to my brother on the matter'—and Jesus refused to speak a word. But did He ever refuse to interfere when the blind eyes looked up to Him for sight? or when the foot was lame or when the arm was helpless or when the tongue was sealed within the lips? Always remember that the love of Christ encompasses every organ we possess. It is the love of God touching the human frame that it might never be bestial any more.

¶ Jesus the physician and liberator is not what His disingenuous modern enemies, in their efforts to revive easy paganism in opposition to asceticism, will have us believe Him to be. They tell us that He is the God of the diseased, the weak, the unclean, the miserable, the impotent, the slave. But Jesus' whole work is a gift of saving (*salute*), of strength, purity, riches and freedom. He comes to the sick to rid them of their illness, to the weak to strengthen them, to them who are unclean that they may be purified, to slaves that they may be set free. He does not love the diseased merely because they are such; like the ancients He loves health, and would fain restore it to all who have lost it.[2]

[1] G. H. Morrison, *The Afterglow of God*, 335.
[2] G. Papini, *The Story of Christ*, 130.

3. But it is not in His incarnation only or in His care for the body that we learn from Jesus the inherent honourableness of the body, the dignity of it as the seat of a Divine life. We learn it in His resumption of that slain body, His redemption of it when He ascended far above all heaven. We learn it in the personal union of even this fickle and material humanity of ours with the Lord of all creation. We learn it in the strange and unknown metamorphosis which passed over His flesh to adapt it to celestial conditions. We learn it in the descent of the Holy Ghost to rest upon the heads of redeemed men and dwell within them, making their bodies temples. We learn it in the promise of the final resurrection of the dead. An awful series of Christian facts, this, instinct from first to last with the startling thought—'He is the saviour of the body.' Yes. He saves it. He does not destroy it. He saves it by making it the organ of the highest life—saves it by restoring to it its divineness, its honour, transforming it into a spiritual body.

¶ One of the greatest thinkers of the ancient world, in what is perhaps his choicest dialogue, has given us in his own matchless way some of the reasons why men should welcome death. He felt that the fear of death was an unworthy fear, and he tried to combat it by quiet argument, and one of his strongest arguments is this, that at death we have done for ever with the body. We shall never more be clogged and fretted by it. It will never hamper the bright soul again. Death is the bird escaping from its cage. Death is the prisoner breaking from his cell. The kindliest attribute of death, for Plato, was not just that a man would be at rest then. It was that a man after his weary battle would have done for ever with a body. That is not the faith of those who name the name of Christ.[1]

[1] G. H. Morrison, *The Afterglow of God*, 339.

Husbands and Wives.

Eph. v. 25.—'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.'

1. THERE is much in the New Testament about the relation of husbands and wives. To the Colossians Paul repeats his counsel to the Ephesians, 'Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.' To Titus Paul wrote that the young women should be trained to love their husbands, 'being in subjection' to them, 'that the word of God be not blasphemed'; the meaning of which is that it may not be made a reproach against Christianity that it destroys order and authority, and inaugurates an era of licence, and sets wife against husband and husband against wife. The word subjection is taken straight out of the Book of Genesis, and is the echo of the old Jewish belief that the relation between husband and wife was fixed from the beginning in these words: 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.' The Apostle Peter repeats the counsel of Paul in his own way, 'Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behaviour of their wives, beholding your chaste manner of life coupled with fear,' that is to say, with reverence. . . . 'Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honour unto the woman, as to the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life.' Paul gave strict orders that the women should keep silence in the church; and if any would learn—that is, if any had any questions to ask—they should 'ask their husbands at home.'

Now all these sayings were the product of an exceedingly difficult age, a transition period. Christianity was just making way, finding a convert here and there, and the most serious and critical of all problems arose not so much in the Church as in the home. The wife who became a Christian found herself in a most delicate and anxious situation. Her husband remained a heathen. A silent but utter revolution had been suddenly wrought out in the relations between the two. The integrity of the home seemed threatened. The wife, with vivid consciousness of a nobler, truer faith, was likely to jeopardize the harmony and unity of the household by unwise revolt against the old order of things. Peter and Paul knew well all the difficulties of the new situation. If they had been dealing with a state of things where both wives and husbands could be counted upon as Christians, they could have left questions of precedence and pre-eminence to be decided by their own mutual love and reverence. But this was exactly what could not be done. And this definition of the relation of wife to husband was written primarily in the interests of the home life, the integrity of the home, the harmony of the home, and the ultimate Christianization of the home. It was more needful that Christian wife should be obedient 'in the Lord,' that is, as far as Christian conscience could, to heathen husband, than that cause to blaspheme should be given by wilful and violent breaking up of the old order, and violation of the peace and sanctity of domestic life.

¶ You fancy, perhaps, as you have been told so often, that a wife's rule should only be over her husband's house, not over his mind. Ah, no! the true rule is just the reverse of that; a true wife in her husband's house is his servant; it is in his heart that she is queen. Whatever of best he can conceive, it is her part to be; whatever of highest he can hope, it is hers to promise; all that is dark in him she must purge into purity; all that is failing in him she must strengthen into truth; from her, through all the world's clamour, he must win his praise; in her, through all the world's warfare, he must find his peace.[1]

¶ A wife may be the making or the unmaking of the best of men. An illustration of this power is furnished in the life of Bunyan.

[1] Ruskin.

The profligate tinker had the good fortune to marry, in early life, a worthy young woman of good parentage. 'My mercy,' he himself says, 'was to light upon a wife whose father and mother were accounted godly. This woman and I, though we came together as poor as poor might be (not having so much household stuff as a dish or a spoon betwixt us both), yet she had for her part, "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven," and "The Practice of Piety," which her father had left her when he died.' And by reading these and other good books, helped by the kindly influence of his wife, Bunyan was gradually reclaimed from his evil ways, and led gently into the paths of peace.[1]

2. So much for the wife: what about the husband? In the passage now before us St. Paul teaches us with what kind of love the husband should regard the wife. 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.' The kind of love with which the man should regard the woman is the kind of love with which Christ regards the Church. Then St. Paul goes on to describe what kind of love that is—'even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it.' 'Gave himself up for it,'—therefore it is unselfish; 'that he might sanctify it,'—therefore it is holy. He gave himself up for it, 'emptied himself,' of all His initial superiority, in order that the church might share with Him all he had. He gave Himself up for it in the most absolutely unselfish manner. And this is always the test by which true love may be distinguished from everything that goes by the name of love; for a great deal of what is called love is nothing in the world except base and cowardly lust. All true love is absolutely unselfish, is entirely Christ-like, and its object is similiar to the object which inspired Christ—'that he might sanctify it.' The object of all true love of man for woman is that man may sanctify her.

¶ Viewing life, as I am compelled to do, as a wonderful order of divine education, I want to claim for love, as we meet it on earth, a nobler place than is assigned to it by minds saturated with material views. Lust is passion divorced from love. We may degrade our passions by judging them as though they were purely animal. What is needed is to lift them into heaven. There is something Godlike in love: what is Godlike must not be converted into flesh; but what is manlike should be taken into God.[1]

3. Every man, then, must be judged by his opinion of women; and every nation must be judged by its treatment of women. That is the true test of our rise or fall in the moral scale. Socrates, when he returned to Athens after having been absent from his native city, was accustomed to ask a very wise question. He would say to his friends, 'What sort of young men have you in the city now?' judging with profound wisdom that the characters of the law-givers and of the State might be judged from the characters of the young men. But there is a better and more searching question even than that which Socrates asked. The question which Christ would ask in every city and in every nation is this: 'What sort of young women have you now?' There is no better test than this of the real character of this nation and of her citizens. Every man must be judged by his opinion of women; and every nation must be judged by its laws in relation to women.

¶ It has been maintained that 'the first man who had the courage to say that a woman is worth loving was Antimachus of Colophon.' Prior to his day, the idea of love—*i.e.* of the beautiful romantic love of which later literature is full—was unknown, or at least unrecognised, among the poets. 'That anyone should have taken the trouble to devote erudition and elaboration to the praise of a woman would have been an unheard-of thing in early Greece.' The love which holds a pre-eminence in the early classic days of Greece is love between man and man. The high, elevating love for a woman—the pure, unselfish devotion which we associate with the word

[1] Samuel Smiles, *Character*, 324.

[1] W. B. Carpenter, *The Spiritual Message of Dante*, 63.

'romantic'—had no place among her greater poets. This does not mean that there were no portraits of noble women presented in the glorious days of Greece; but it does mean that the idea of a chivalrous reverence for womanhood, apart from the comforts which her presence conferred, had not in those days found its voice.

With the growth of asceticism there came, according to Dr. Lecky, a fashion of thought which lowered the status and dignity of womanhood. 'Woman was represented as the door of hell, as the mother of all human ills. . . . Their essentially subordinate position was continually maintained.' Canon law reflected this view, and it was for this reason that Sir Henry Maine held that the expositors of canon law had done injury to civilisation.

With the romantic movement, womanhood once more was given a high place in the thought of man. Poets began to sing the praises of women: their beauty was no longer denounced as a danger: it was celebrated in song. Devotion to womanhood became fashionable: the knight, wearing his lady's favour, went proudly into combat. It became recognized that man could draw a strong and inspiring incentive to noble doing and self-mastery in life from the pure and worshipful affection he bore to the woman he reverenced.[1]

¶ Francis Thompson in a notable essay has declared that love in the classic poets is almost devoid of spiritual content because the poet has no perception of the truth, emphasized by all the great Christian teachers, that the body is the temple of the spirit. Christian teaching has therefore given a new and richer meaning, a meaning which though mystical is most profoundly real, to those emotions which are the groundwork of the marriage relation. It becomes something far greater than a convenient union of fortune and person under one sheltering roof; it foreshadows that union of souls which even here may form an antepast of heaven.[2]

[1] W. B. Carpenter, *The Spiritual Message of Dante*, 48.
[2] A. C. Hill, *The Sword of the Lord*, 263.

The Love of Christ for the Church.

Eph. v. 25.—'Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it.'

1. What is love? Love is one of the dethroned words in human speech; it goes about without its crown. And we have got to restore something of its lost majesty and authority before we have even a passable canon for interpreting the love of our Lord. We cannot make any headway in Scriptural exposition until we have redeemed our minds from all little and belittling conceptions of love, and until we have re-enthroned the word in its essential and appointed sovereignty.

Let us, then, begin here. The primal and central element in all true love is *holiness*. When sin is in the heart love is frightfully stricken. Sin half-slays love and makes her blind. Holiness is the innermost secret of Fatherhood, and in love's temple the holy of holies is holiness itself.

And the second element in all true love is *benevolence*, the genius of sacrifice, the spirit of self-impartation. Love can never be self-contained. The very life of love is found in movement away from self. Love leaves home to be at home. Stop its exodus, you kill its genesis. 'God so loved . . . that he gave!' 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'

And the third great element in all true love is *sympathy*, a fine sensitiveness of discernment, an exquisite fellow-feeling, a sort of mystical divining-rod which discovers the waters moving in another man's life, a vicarious strength which apprehends another's spiritual estate, and thrills to hidden joys and sorrows.

2. Now what is the figure chosen by the Apostle to express the relationship of the Lord to His Church. It is the figure of the husband and wife, and of that relationship in its tender and exquisite springtime, the communion of Bridegroom and bride. 'Christ also loved the church'—that is the declaration

of the Bridegroom's affection for His bride; 'and gave himself up for it'—that is the Bridegroom's dowry for His bride; 'having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word'—that is the bride's preparation for her wonderful Husband; and this is the crowning day of festal triumph—'that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.' Let us note how this Love-ministry of the Bridegroom ministers to His bride: 'That he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word.'

(1) First, then, the holy, sacrificial love of the Bridegroom will cleanse His bride. He Himself will prepare His bride for the festal day. He will provide clean, white raiment, in place of her own unclean and bedraggled attire. And how will He do it? 'By the washing of water with the word.' In what other way can the mental habits of a life be changed? If you want to purify a man's mind, to give him clean mental attire, you can do it only by the washing ministry of new ideas. Give any man a new set and circle of ideas, and you give that man a new life. And the clean, sweet thought of Jesus, pouring into a mind, washes it like the passing of the tide over the littered sands of the seashore. The bride is to be cleansed by the gracious conveyance of the Bridegroom's thought, 'by the washing of water with the word.' She is to receive 'the mind of Christ.' When we have gained a new mental heaven we shall have a new earth; all things will become new; for we are to be transformed by the renewing of the mind.

(2) But the Bridegroom does more than cleanse His bride; He cleanses that He may sanctify. And the whole purpose of sanctification is just that the cleansing may be carried forward to richer and more advanced attainment. Sanctifying is cleansing with a plus; it is purity beautified. The bride is to be not only pure but lovely; not only righteous but winsome. The King's daughter is to be 'all glorious within,' her clothing also of fine gold. What is the Bridegroom prepared to do for her in the way of making her lovely? 'That he might present the church to himself a glorious church.' Whatever else the phrase may mean, it surely denotes that about the Church there shall be nothing tawdry, nothing flimsy, nothing thin; but a weighty splendour like the glory of the noonday sun. That is the love-purpose of the Bridegroom concerning His bride, the Church. It is His will that His Church be weightily impressive, radiantly conspicuous with a strong and consistent glory; that amid all the false lights, and cheap fireworks, and dim uncertain lamps of the world she may be like a blazing planet, of incomparable and constant splendour.

¶ I read over again this glowing picture of Paul the Apostle. I say the words over to myself, 'sanctified,' 'cleansed,' 'glorious,' 'without spot or wrinkle,' 'holy and without blemish,' and it dawns on me that this is what Christ was, and I come to the conclusion, from which I must never depart, that He loved the Church and gave Himself up for it, that He might make it like Himself; that He loved me and gave Himself for me that He might make me like Himself, and I believe that that miracle of transformation may take place in me, and in you, and in all men, and that if it is not taking place, then as far as I am concerned He has died in vain. How it takes place I cannot tell, save that I know if I live with a powerful personality, and do not resist His influence, I shall grow like Him.[1]

And soon before the astonished gaze,
Of the whole universe of God,
Thou wilt in glory's living blaze,
Display thy Bride, once bought with blood.
For ever in that light above,
To shine, the trophy of Thy love.[2]

[1] C. Brown, *Lessons from the Cross*, 84.
[2] H. R. King, *The Syrian Soldier and Other Poems*, 121.

A Glorious Church.

Eph. v. 27.—'That he might present the church to himself a glorious church.'

WHAT must we hope for and look for in the 'glorious' Church of the future—in a Church which shall be really strong and thoroughly adequate for the nation's need? Many things, no doubt, will be expected and demanded. The Church of the future, the vigorous and efficient Church that we are longing for, must be characterized at any rate by the following four things—reality, unity, audacity, spirituality. Each of these things is necessary, and all of them together are necessary, if the Church is to do successfully its God-appointed work.

1. In the first place, the Church of the future will be characterized by the note of *reality*. There will be reality in faith and reality in practice. In other words, the members of that Church will really believe what they profess to believe, and will really try to act as their Lord commanded them to act. Is that what is done at present? Who would venture to affirm it?

(1) Take the *faith* of the Church, for example. Who would venture to affirm that, to the mass of professing Church people, even the most vital and essential and fundamental facts of our religion—God and Christ and the life everlasting—are as real and vivid and unquestionable as are the facts, say, of the rise in rates or the scarcity of houses? Who would venture to affirm that the average Church member is as confidently certain about the forgiveness of sins and the grace of the Holy Spirit as he is about the security of the latest guaranteed Government loan?

In a volume of essays, entitled *The Church in the Furnace*, Canon Hannay (better known to most of us as 'George Birmingham') tells an anecdote which bears upon this point. Somewhere in France he came across a young officer who had that morning received his orders to go into the firing line. He was sitting on a table under the verandah of an estaminet, waiting for a conveyance to take him to the neighbouring town. And in the course of conversation he suddenly asked the chaplain what his honest opinion was as to the chances of a future life. 'You mustn't think I'm an atheist,' he said, 'or a sceptic, or anything like that. I'm not. I used to go to church pretty regularly. I used to go to communion sometimes—with my mother, you know. I never doubted about any of those things, the things I was taught. I supposed they were all right. Anyhow, I didn't bother. But now I want to know.'

(2) And just as the faith of many is unreal, so, too, there is much unreality in the common Christian *practice*. We profess to be Christians; we call ourselves followers of Christ; but how many of us try seriously to carry out the Lord's injunctions? How many of us understand that real membership of Christ's Church involves real charity, real humility, real detachment from the world, real service, real unselfishness, real suffering for others?

¶ 'I have only met one real Christian in my life,' said a British officer; 'and he was a man who really would have given you the coat off his back—but he was regarded as the village idiot!' Ah, we play at being Christians. We talk the talk, but we do not honestly live the life. It has been remarked of the typical Englishman that he asks himself every morning, 'What thing can I make a compromise about to-day?' And I am afraid that such spirit of compromise—the spirit which addresses itself to 'making the best of both worlds'—is only too evident in popular religion. But in Christianity—real Christianity—there can be no *tertium quid*. The Christian must be Christ's man—really and truly, wholly and solely that—or nothing. As old Thomas Carlyle expressed it in his bluff, outspoken way—'None of your Heaven-and-Hell Amalgamation Companies for me!'

2. In the next place, the Church of the future must be characterized by *unity*. For it is admitted on all sides that one main reason

of the Church's failure is that it is so miserably disunited. As it exists at the present moment, it has no distinctive outlook, no distinctive policy, no distinctive aim. It is just a jumble of sects and parties. What wonder that such a Church fails ignominiously in great emergencies? Where there is no true corporate life, there can be no corporate aim and ideal, and no vigorous, purposeful and effective action.

Why cannot we acknowledge that it takes all sorts to make a Church? There may be diversity and still unity. 'The world in which we live,' Mr. Stephen Graham writes, 'is a marvellous diversity. The rose is not wrong, the lily is not wrong, the lion is not absurd, the tiger is not absurd, diamond does not contradict ruby.' And in the Church also there is room for every variety of Christian type. And for this infinite diversity in the manifestation of one spirit we ought, instead of uttering ceaseless petulant complaints, to give glory to God for ever and ever.

3. Then the third of the notes of the Church of the future will be *audacity*—courage, venturesomeness, 'happy valiancy.' Too long has our Church been satisfied to be a tame-cat Church—moderate, discreet, conciliatory, deferentially inoffensive—its life and action directed by considerations of what is safe and seemly, and its official pronouncements inspired less by the enthusiasm of the Apostles than by the mild and elderly wisdom of the Athenæum Club. Decorum and prudent policy are doubtless good things in their way, but they are not forces that shake the world. And when we think of the smooth conventionalism, the lack of enterprise and initiative, that has marked our Church life in the past, we can hardly be surprised when the Church confesses itself a failure. It has made no gross mistakes, but it has scored no great successes. It has suffered no losses, but it has achieved no marvels.

A leading schoolmaster has said that the one text on which you ought to preach to schoolboys is, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.' And a similar appeal to the capacity for self-sacrifice and the instinct for high-adventure is equally potent with grown men. To almost all might be applied the description which was originally written with special reference to our soldiers:—'The word "safety" has no charm for them. They don't like safety. The heaven of the conventional preacher is a place they would rather avoid. They want the company of jolly, chesty, big-hearted men, and are inclined to think they would find them elsewhere. But the words which Christ used—"sacrifice," "a cross," "losing life"—these they would understand. They would draw to a Master who asked so much of them, and who had Himself risked everything.'

4. Then, lastly, there is one other note which must distinguish the Church of the future, the note of *spirituality*. Spirituality is that vivid sense of the supernatural, that lively consciousness of God and of the invisible world of God, which is perhaps the most essential of all the attributes of a true Church. For what, after all, is a Church if it be not a shrine of the Sacred Presence? And what is the function of a Church if it be not to waken and stimulate the spiritual faculties of its members, and lead even the poorest and the rudest and the most ignorant to some perception of the things that are everlasting and Divine?

The future Church will be the home, not only of morality, but of mystery. Within its precincts men will find, not only inspiration to patriotism and good citizenship, but real communion with the living God. They will know Him, and taste His peace, and live in the glory of His Presence. Then, in the atmosphere of the Spirit, all the children of the Spirit will become aware of their spirituality. Their spiritual eyes will be opened, and their spiritual ears unstopped, and their spiritual forces quickened for the pursuit of the spiritual ideal. It will be the ideal expressed in the saying of St. Macarius to the sportsman, 'I hunt after God as you hunt after game'; and not, as too often nowadays, the ideal of the respectable Samuel Smiles,

commending character as sound policy and gravely proclaiming to an admiring British public the acceptable Gospel of Getting On.[1]

A Glorious Church.

Eph. v. 27.—'A glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.'

THAT was St. Paul's ideal. Was it realized in his own day? We catch a glimpse of the Church on the road to Jerusalem, in the personality of the disciple band, and it is easy to note that she is spotted and defiled by selfish and quarrelsome ambitions, wrinkled by most unholy anger, narrow-minded, somewhat intolerant. We catch sight of her again in Corinth, and here again the spots and wrinkles are obtrusive, and she is neither very fair nor very clean. 'There are contentions among you!' 'There is among you envying, and strife, and divisions!' Rather a fearsome bride! We get a glimpse of her yet again in the region of Galatia, and here her demeanour is somewhat startling. 'I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel.' 'Who did bewitch you?' Then she is not only spotted and wrinkled, but also fickle in her affections. Thus the bride is not superlatively attractive, and we may well wonder what the Lord saw in her that He desired her; and yet this is the bride He loved, and this is the bride He will continue to love, and with such holy and fruitful purpose that, next to the Godhead, she herself shall be the supreme wonder of the world; for are we not told that one eager spirit, subdued by the awful splendour, shall speak whisperingly to another spirit, and say, 'Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.'

A glorious Church, not having spot! That is the love-purpose of the Lover for His bride. 'Not having spot,' no stain on her purity; no mire of the world hidden within the folds and creases of her attire; nothing dirty or compromising in her habits; no permanent filth upon the hem of her garments; a perfectly clean Church, separate from all the defilements of the world. 'Without spot, or wrinkle!' Not only are the spots to be wiped out, but the wrinkles are to be smoothed out too. The Bridegroom wants no mark of defilement about His bride, and He wants no sign of weariness or advancing age. He would have His church unwrinkled, with ever youthful spirits, with the fresh and youthful movements of the time. He would have her the contemporary of every generation, abreast of all glorious advances, and with a countenance as new and as bright as the sun.

How does the Church we see and know compare with that gleaming and beautiful ideal? Suppose we betake ourselves, as Christians and churchmen, to the painful but healthy exercise of self-examination. Perhaps the best service we can render in the present distress is to set our own house in order, and make the Church what Christ meant it to be.

1. The Church, then, in Christ's ideal of it, is to be a *glorious* Church. In the Greek original the word glorious is strongly stressed and emphasized. The Church is to be a splendid, dazzling, magnificent Church. Now there is many a great achievement to be set down to the credit of the Church, and it would be base ingratitude on our part to forget it. But would anyone venture to assert that men today are arrested by the Church's splendour?—that there is about the Church some unearthly glory that subdues men into awe? The mortifying truth is this, that people are more attracted by the beauty of the buildings in which the Church meets than they are by any spiritual glory in the Church itself. From the ends of the earth men travel to see Westminster Abbey, and Notre Dame, and Milan Cathedral, and St. Peter's at Rome. But the significant thing is that people may look with admiration and pride on the buildings in which Christian worship is held, and yet disregard and despise the faith for which they stand.

[1] F. Homes Dudden, *The Dead and the Living*, 73ff.

¶ When Francis, reincarnating Christ, tramped through Italy preaching the Gospel, seeking not gain, but souls, the whole land worshipped before the revealed glory of the Lord. When David Livingstone turned his back on honours at home that he might minister to stricken and bleeding Africa, many an Englishman learned to reverence the Christ whose servant Livingstone was. When Father Damien made his great sacrifice for the lepers of the South Seas, the lives of many were touched to finer issues. For a moment the splendour of the faith flashed before men's astonished eyes. But the Livingstones, and the Damiens, and the Florence Nightingales, and the Catherine Booths are so rare.[1]

2. Again, the Church, according to Christ's ideal, is to be *without spot*. But is the ideal realized? Has the Church no smudge upon her face, no stain upon her garments? If all the criticisms passed upon her be true, she has spots enough. Even those who love the Church best cannot deny the existence of smudges and stains which mar and deface her beauty. Take, for example the worldliness of her people. What a 'spot' upon the Church's glory this is! The fact is, few of us live for the great Christian aims and by the great Christian motives. Most of us are just as keen upon 'getting on' as those who make no profession at all. We busy ourselves laying up treasure on earth. There is little or no suggestion of unworldliness about us, of the gay carelessness of men who know that because they have Christ they have all things and abound. In fact, that is the charge so often brought up against us—that there is so little practical difference between us and merely worldly people. Our faith seems to have little or no effect on our practice.

There was something wonderfully subduing and attractive about the Church when it really did practise its faith, when it really was an unworldly Church. That is what we read about the primitive Church: 'Neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.' There is no need to discuss the question whether this was communism or whether it was not; whether the action was wise or whether it was not. The point to notice is the unselfishness, the unworldliness, the gay carelessness of these people, their refusal to be anxious about food and raiment, their happy assurance that having Christ they had all things. That Church could not be disregarded or ignored. This is what we read about the effect produced by this unworldly Church: 'Great grace was upon them all.' They had 'favour with all the people.' 'And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved.' That Church, 'unspotted' by worldliness, was a mighty and victorious Church.

¶ Our huge cities have in them a mass of people below the poverty line. Mr. Charles Booth, in his 'Life and Labour in London,' shows how Free Church religion thrives best in the middle class districts. When a certain line of poverty has been passed the Churches lose their hold almost completely, in spite of the most heroic efforts of Christian workers. Does that mean that God's Spirit is powerless below that line? Does it not mean rather that His Spirit is by these failures calling to our notice His violated laws, and insisting on our obedience to them as the condition of His working? We are under a *régime* which is creating enormous fortunes for the few with a dead level of poverty for the many. The rich few live in one world, and the impecunious many in another. These worlds scarcely touch. If this is a right, a normal condition, then Christianity, which calls for a brotherly fellowship, a loving amity which expresses itself in a generous sharing of both the inner and the outer life, is clearly wrong. We do not think it is Christianity that is wrong, but something else. Shall the Church acquiesce in all this; submit to be financed by millionaires, and in return accept and

[1] J. D. Jones.

preach the millionaire social view; or will it have the wisdom to see that its finance, with every other portion of its scheme, can only be healthy as it comes from the free universal offerings of an equalised, industrious community; none so rich as to be separated from their neighbours, none so poor as to have nothing to spare for the ideal, spiritual interests?

What does all this point to? Is it Socialism? It depends what we mean by Socialism. The people who mean by it the abolition of private property, and the institution of absolute equality, are up against the primal facts of nature and life. There never has been and never will be equality, either in heaven or upon earth. And private property will never be extinguished so long as a man carries his own soul inside his own body. Surely we have not far to look for the real working, the real Christian system? What is our family life, where it is well ordered and wholesome, but the ideal mingling of the social and the individualist principles? There is no equality. The father is more than his children. There is no elimination of private property. The parental purse is deeper than that of the boys and girls. And yet the home is a communistic society; a society where no one wants so long as family funds are available; where the interest of each is the interest of all; where the differences of age, or ability, or position, do not prevent the freest, most loving intercourse. It is a commonwealth, a Christian commonwealth, set there before us by God, the Father of all families of the earth, as the type of what our larger, national fellowship is to be. It is the ideal which the Church, if it is to preserve itself and preserve the nation, has now to work for with the zeal of the ancient prophets, the fervour of the Christian apostles. The nation has a soul as well as the individual; and the salvation of the one, if it is to be effectual, must go hand in hand with the salvation of the other.[1]

3. Once again, the Church of Christ's ideal is a Church that has *no wrinkles*. But no one can look at the Church to-day and say she has no wrinkle. Her face is seamed with lines of care. Something has furrowed deep her cheek and brow. She is not a confident and lighthearted Church. She is an anxious and harassed Church. She confronts the heathenism of foreign lands and she is worried. She goes on with the work, but there is no dash or elan or abandon about it. Every missionary society's report reveals wrinkles on the Church's brow. She is worried in face of the indifference at home. There is a note of despondency and querulousness in her speech. Anyone who reads the unending discussions on 'How to win the masses,' 'How to keep the children,' etc., can see the wrinkles on the Church's brow. She is a poor, troubled, distressed, strained and wrinkled Church. She does not show the world a young and smiling face.

¶ Jesus Christ is more than a historical figure, He is *Yesterday, and To-day and For Ever*. If we accept the eternal youth of Christ and live our lives in Him, then plainly our possibilities of service and our vision of service become something very different from a traditional habit of good works.

Let us turn for a moment to the Moravians, . . . The Moravian work was all done with a joyous lilt which is itself the language of youth; they actually called themselves the babes of Christ, the Lamb of God.

Moreover, these people very nearly became the pioneers of the great social movement which is giving colour to the thought and motion to the life of our own time. They had a liturgy which is as full of force and fire as the conventional liturgies are destitute of such qualities. If I quote you some sentences from that liturgy, you will justify what otherwise may seem too sweeping a judgment. What do you think of this?

Oh that we might never see a necessitous person go unrelieved!
Oh that none of us might eat his morsel alone!
Oh that we might see none suffer for want of clothing!

[1] J. Brierley, *Religion and To-day*, 27.

Oh that we might be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame!
Oh that we could refresh the heart of the fatherless!
Oh that we could mitigate the burden of the labouring man, and be ourselves not ministered unto but minister!
Feed us with that princely repast of solacing others!
Oh that the blessing of him that was ready to perish may come upon us!
Yes, may our heart rejoice to see it go well with our enemies; Thou knowest, Lord, what spirit we are of.

Everyone must feel that this is a very different kind of liturgy from 'Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.' It has the air of youth about it, and the seeds of reform in it.[1]

'Or any such Thing.'

Eph. v. 27.—'A glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.'

THE faults of the Church are very much to the fore at the present time; some people are thinking about them, and a great many more are talking about them. Many of the things that are said are quite true, and some of them are not. Some of the things that are said are wise, and others are marvellously foolish. Some of the things that are said are the result of knowledge, and others spring from pure ignorance. But we are not concerned with these. The point for us who belong to the great Church of God is not what people say about us, but what manner of men and women we are. And the call to us to-day is to examine the dangers that lurk near to our system, to keep our minds open to fresh revelation, to avoid being self-satisfied, and too conventional, and, still more, to give ourselves each day to God, that we may draw into our hearts the strength that comes from Him. And so God will use us, unimportant men and women as we know we are. God will use us to make the Church a power in the world. He will use us to make men see that it is worth while to go back to Bethlehem and Nazareth and the Cross to find their inspiration.

If we want the Church which we love, and in whose mission we believe, to be a power for Christ in these difficult and anxious times, then we need continually to watch those dangers which always lurk near to religious systems. Now the perils which always await the Church may be described as narrowness and worldliness. Let us speak about these two perils, and in doing so let us remember that they are closely connected with things that are good and splendid and true.

1. *Narrowness.*—The word has more uses than one.

(1) There is *narrowness of outlook.* We are in danger of forgetting our responsibility to the world outside the Church. Such narrowness springs from what is good, for the very purpose of Christianity is, of course, primarily and essentially spiritual. The gospel of Christ exists to save the souls of men, and to bring them into communion with God. It is just for that very reason that our outlook with regard to the evils and problems of life may be narrow. We may be so concerned with the salvation of our own souls that we may forget that there is such a thing as moral and social salvation on a very large scale.

(2) There is *narrowness of thought.* Once more this springs from something which is in itself absolutely good and splendid and true. For religion, if it is to be worth anything, must stand for settled conviction; it must bear witness to what it believes to be eternal truth. And we Christian men and women do believe that certain things are true. We believe that the Son of God has come into the world; that He was born for our sakes; that He manifested God to mankind. We believe that He lived and died also for the salvation of the world. We believe that He is not a dead Christ, but a living Saviour, present in His Church, the world's true Sovereign and Master. We believe that the Spirit of God dwells within our hearts; 'and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life

[1] J. Rendel Harris.

of the world to come.' And we are quite sure that those whom we speak of as gone from us are one with us in this great Christian society. But just because we have this inheritance we are in danger of becoming narrow. For with this splendid inheritance of truth we may forget that the language of creeds, like all human language, cannot be a perfect expression of the truth of God. We may forget that creeds can be interpreted in more senses than one, and that, to quote an old writer, 'the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His Word.' Why, to speak as though we could not get fresh light upon old truths is to speak as though the Holy Spirit were not present with us; or as though we ourselves were infallible.

¶ We talk continually of 'narrow' views in religion or in conduct. There are such, undoubtedly, but what we have first to learn on this question is that narrowness is not in itself necessarily an evil. If it were, be sure we should not find it so continually and so deeply wrought into the innermost processes of living. Nature, we find, is narrow as well as broad, and her narrowness is as needful as her breadth. In order to get her results she is perpetually limiting things, shutting them behind her barriers. She wraps her seed up close till its time comes to unfold. She is continually purchasing intensity at the cost of expansion. Yet Nature, using thus her tools of narrowness, works incessantly towards breadth as a result. Beginning at simple combinations, her tendency is always to a greater complexity.

When we come to the problems of morals and religion we find a similarity of phenomena which shows us, on a higher plane, the working of the self-same process, under the self-same guidance. Religion, to secure its results, has used, and effectively used, the narrowing instincts, and has therein followed strictly the order of Nature. Christianity, for instance, would not, humanly speaking, have won its victories and gained its position in the world, apart from the employment, at certain periods, of Nature's method of narrowness. The early Christians concentrated on one side of life. They lost view of some others, but what they gained thereby, for themselves and the future, was worth the sacrifice. A certain insulation was required in the making of a martyr. And the faith of the Church as a whole was for a long while of too *naïve* a kind to bear sudden expansions. It followed a true instinct in looking askance at new elements. It was by slow degrees, amid much misgiving, and after hard fighting, that art and literature, and science last of all, found a place in it.

But Nature, so slow, so careful, so conservative in her operations, yet never stands still. The May-time comes, and then her blooms, hitherto so carefully shut up from the wintry blast, must unclose and dare the open. In humanity as a whole, and in the development of the individual mind in particular, a point is at length reached when the simpler form has to blend with the new elements.

It is when we have reached this point of growth that we are faced with a question which may be said to constitute the peculiar problem of our day. It is that of combining the wider interest with the older fervour. The dilemma is a serious one to many earnest souls. But if we have correctly stated the doctrine of this question there should be no difficulty about its solution. It is all a matter of the stage of development. . . . In the spiritual development of humanity the point will be reached when these diverse elements will be included. They will be included in the consciousness of the spiritual man because they are included in the consciousness of God. And that stage has already been reached by many souls. They have learned the spiritual life as at once an unfathomed depth, and as an illimitable breadth. They pass from one phase to another without loss, but with a conscious enrichment, and the point they have attained will be attained in the end by all.[1]

2. *Worldliness.*—This also springs from something which is good. We want the Church to be a tremendous power. We want to draw in everybody within the limits of or-

[1] J. Brierley.

ganized Christianity, because we believe that we have a gospel which the world needs, and without which mankind cannot know what it is to live. But there again comes in our danger of being worldly, of caring too much for external success. We know that in the past one of the perils of the Church was that of seeking the patronage of those whom the world calls great and influential, very often at the expense of principle. That is scarcely our danger to-day. Power has passed into the hands of a different class of society. But in consequence of it there is a danger lest the Church should seek to win the approval of the crowd by repeating cries that happen at the moment to be popular. This is only worldliness in another form. We may care too much for mere numbers. Especially is this the case with those of us who believe in what is known as church-going. Of course we believe in church-going. We know what the House of God means to us. We know the strength that comes to us as we offer ourselves to God in humble worship. But there is such a thing as caring too much about church-going. Let us remember that the thing that matters most is not the number of people that we get into the church, but the number of men and women who go out from the church, and who carry with them a character that can transform the world.

¶ The world's chief need at this moment is a spiritual one; though it does not know it. The world needs to understand that it can live only as it is guided by the Spirit of God, and that the things that count in reconstruction, are, first of all, qualities that are Christ-like. Now that need will never be supplied by systems, however splendid and right they may be; nor by services in church, however inspiring and uplifting we may know them to be. The world's need to-day will be supplied only by men and women who, under God, and depending upon Him, go forth into life to uphold Christ's standard of values in a generation which finds it very easy to forget them; men and women who, midst of the strife and the enmity of which the world is pretty full, are making manifest the glory of love and understanding, and wide-mindedness, and wide-heartedness, inspired by Christ; men and women, who, in the midst of the world's cares and anxieties are able to show by their very faces that they have got within them the peace of God which nothing can take from them.

¶ Richard Baxter used to say that it is because we have so few high saints that we have so many low sinners. And we must confess sorrowfully that those disciples who are indeed the salt of the earth have never been plentiful. Nevertheless, the Church endures and overcomes by virtue of living examples like theirs. And probably 'there has scarcely been a town in any Christian country since the time of Christ where a century has passed without exhibiting a character of such elevation that his mere presence has shamed the bad and made the good better, and has been felt at times like the presence of God Himself.'[1]

Members of Christ's Body.

Eph. v. 30.—'We are members of his body.'

1. In the second group of the Pauline Epistles we find much about the mystical union between Christ and the believer. The Apostle tells us that though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him so no more. We know Him after the spirit. The well-spring is opened in the heart. In communion, as well as in union, we deal directly with the risen Lord. There is an outward revelation which is most precious, but the inward revelation is more precious still. We do not lose the historical Jesus. We do not lose any deed He wrought, any word He spoke, any agony He endured. Each is more precious than gold. The historical Jesus and the risen Lord are one; but the historical Jesus would be little to us if we had not the risen Lord, and it is the revelation of the Resurrection and the Enthronement that glorifies the earthly life in Palestine. The

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 47.

first Adam is of the earth, earthy; the second Adam is a Quickening Spirit and the Lord from heaven. We are saved through the Atonement, and saved into the union. The fact of the union is the pivot of the entire theology.

The thought is especially prominent in the Epistle to the Ephesians. And nowhere is it expressed more boldly than in this text. It is true the phrase 'of his flesh and of his bones,' found in the Authorized Version, is an early gloss, but the word 'members' or 'limbs' is itself very striking. For our limbs are our companions, everywhere and always; we and they are one thing, one interest, one life; their condition is of untold importance to us; their very appearance is of consequence. Union can go no nearer than it goes between limbs and man.

¶ 'Member' is only a longer word for 'limb'; the two are synonymous, one of Latin origin, the other of English; a limb means a member, and a member means a limb. Only there is this practical difference, that we have come in the course of time to use 'member' in a large, and vague, general sense, in which we do not use 'limb.' We speak of a 'member' of Parliament, or of a committee, or of a club, but never of a 'limb' of such companies of people. The word 'limb' is much more restricted than is its parallel word to denote connexions deep, organic, vital, between part and whole.

2. To describe the Christian as a 'limb' of the Lord Jesus Christ brings home to us in a special way the thought of a connexion with Him mysteriously close and strong. It reminds us that the bond between follower and Master is far more than one of spiritual regard, however reverent and tender; far different from one which depends even upon His being the sublime Object of our worship and of our gratitude, as our Divine Saviour and our gracious Shepherd and Friend. It leads us deep into that wonderful secret of His love and power, our living union with Him. It points us to that gracious desire and purpose of His heart, that we, sinners of the dust, ruined and wrecked by the fall, 'stained and dyed' by our own transgressions, should be not only mercifully rescued by His atoning work, but brought inconceivably close to Him in His holy and all-powerful life, knit up with Him in it by living bonds, even as our hands and fingers are part and parcel with us, close to us and instinctively protected by us as dear parts of our very being.

(1) If we are limbs of His Body, it is evident that Christ loves us. Let us rest upon the insight which we get through this window of heavenly light into 'the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' For me, a sinner, the Prince of Glory thus cares. To Him, in all His majesty, 'at the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him,' I am dear to this degree and in this sense. 'He hath a desire to the work of his hands,' though that work is my poor, broken, sin-spoiled self. And the desire is so tender, and so strong, that it cannot stop short of the will that I shall be His 'limb.' He does not merely condescend to touch my personality with His holy finger. It is not enough for Him to stretch out His finger and touch my fallen being. He must transfigure my being into a oneness with His which makes it, as it were, His finger; a 'limb' of His body.

(2) If we are limbs of His body, we can do service for Him. For the supreme interest to us of our lips, hands, feet, lies in our use of them. All day long we are, through them, carrying out our purposes, carrying on our intercourse, getting our duties done, enjoying our pleasures. It is indeed all-important to my hand that, for its own life and health, it should be in fullest living union with me. It is important to my comfort that it should, in such union, be alive and healthy, giving me no trouble by ill conditions. But it is above all things important to me that I should have always the freest and most instant use of it. Its own well-being is much. But my use of it in that well-being is more; it is the ultimate object of its existence as part of my system.

¶ God actually needs and uses us as His

limbs. All through the story of Redemption it is so. In the Old Testament days He walked by Joseph, as His feet, to prepare deliverance in Egypt, and by Moses, as His feet, to lead up His people in triumph out of it. By Nathan, as His lips, He wakened David from His death-sleep, and by Isaiah, as His lips, He promised Himself to be the Lamb of God. In New Testament times He 'began both to do and to teach' (Acts i. 1) in His own person; but these words plainly imply that He went on to do, and went on to teach, through Peter, and John, and Paul, and Luke, and Aquila.[1]

(3) There is another thought. If we are Christ's limbs may we not be sure that the suffering about which we cannot talk to any human being is not only known to Christ, but is also felt by Christ? May we not say that in all our afflictions Christ is afflicted; that the sorrows of the members are the sorrows of the Head, and that on the Head rests in some mysterious fashion the burden which every member bears.

¶ It is true that often we are so self-absorbed in our own trials, so bowed beneath the burden of our own cross, that we do not feel that the world's Cross-bearer is walking up our Calvary by our side.

But let us not be deceived. God knows what sorrows we dwell with; and Christ tasted them all before us. He walks silently beside us many a time, even sometimes at a distance, but following; and when He sees that we are fit to bear the talking of it, He walks close to our heart and speaks to us.[2]

Marriage.

Eph. v. 31.—'And they two shall be one flesh.'

God made the man and the woman for each other. Marriage is the most dignified, honourable, and helpful relationship into which we can enter, and 'for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.'

[1] H. C. G. Moule.
[2] Lauchlan Maclean Watt, *The Communion Table.*

¶ Is not this a bit of God's plan in the ideal friendship? that man and woman living together in the union of love shall each so absorb the life of the other, that each shall become a perfect human being, even while retaining the distinctive traits; and that both together shall make the perfect human unit. This was Tennyson's thought as, with keen discrimination, he penned his exquisite lines in 'The Princess.'

For woman is not undevelopt man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other e'en as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.[1]

1. It is a relationship of *mutual sympathy.* That comprehensive word 'sympathy' is to be understood here in its largest sense. Those who enter into this binding fellowship ought to be one in the completest measure possible to their entire nature, for the supreme end of marriage is not simply the continuance of the human race, but the culture and development of all the noblest faculties of the intel-

[1] S. D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Home Ideals*, 64.

lect and the spirit. The original Divine purpose of this relationship is distinctly expressed in the words, 'The Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone—I will make an helpmeet for him'; and every kind of true helpfulness of man to woman, or woman to man, must always be in the measure of their sympathy with each other. The cause of most of those sad failures in household life of which we sometimes hear, and of which there are far more than the outside world imagines, arises from defect in this respect. It is absolutely impossible that there should be any complete satisfaction in this relationship unless there exists a growing harmony of thought and feeling.

¶ Just as true marriage is the highest blessedness that can come to man or woman, so a false marriage, a marriage conceived in vanity or avarice or sensuality, is the most fearful calamity. The binding of two loveless, selfish hearts together can only result in mutual misery. The resulting state is not simply hell, as it is frequently called. It is that more painful, but at the same time more hopeful, condition which in figurative language we may describe as the compelling of persons who are fit only for hell to dwell perpetually in heaven. It is a condition which calls for the expression of the most tender and unselfish love at every point of constant contact imposed upon persons who have no love to give. The supreme blessedness of the ideal marriage measures by contrast the superlative wretchedness of a loveless union . . . The modern man brings to his wife a wide range of business sagacity, political influence, scientific and speculative interests. The modern woman brings to her husband rich acquisitions in literary and esthetic taste, social life and philanthropic and religious fervour. Each life is reinforced and multiplied by all that is in the other; and thus both enter through the portals of the family into the life of the Universal Spirit, of which at best only vague and shadowy glimpses come to them in the blindness of their individualistic isolation.[1]

[1] W. de Witt Hyde.

¶ William Blake was one of the few men who have been vouchsafed a perfect marriage, a true creative and imperishable relationship. Blake had nothing to learn in the matter of his relationship to his work. He had but to take pen or pencil in hand to pass into an almost trance of concentration, an absorption so violent indeed, that without the life-giving support of another relationship he could not have endured it, and must have become more mad than he seemed to his contemporaries. . . . His creation must have become in the end as remote and terrible as that of Michael Angelo, but for his fortunate relations with his wife. Here was the perfect woman for him, one who could understand and surrender to the creative principle of marriage which is the inter-penetration and inter-pregnation of two beings, absorbing their desires, their passions, their instincts, all that they have of intellect, imagination and crude force, and transfiguring all into the creation of a universe in which both can dwell in security and knowledge of the soul and that ineffable love of which the soul is the bearer, upon condition only that this universe which they have created shall be continually re-created in their love, a process as swift and miraculously sure as that which sustains and permeates the greater universe which is God's conception. It is this spiritual conception which is the aim and purpose of marriage with its terrible and too often destructive intimacy. The physical conception of the woman is but an outward and visible sign of it, and so is the artistic conception that takes place in the man, whether or no it subsequently finds expression. This is the most direct and the most powerful of relationships; and all others, containing in a lesser degree the same elements, are subsidiary to it. Blake's wife, rare among women, understood this and welcomed the passion that went into his work as the fruit of their union, and never fretted him with jealousy or dread lest something rare and beautiful in the man was escaping her. She knew that great work is the condition precedent to great love, without which there can be no continuance of great work; and she was

blessed among women, having and holding the love of a man without equal in his day or in any time: sharing his suffering, doing what she could to warm the coldness of his isolation, tending the child in him, watching over him even in the glory of his death, when the clear passion of the man escaped from the confinement of the body.[1]

2. It is a relationship of *mutual sacredness*. The Roman Catholic Church includes matrimony among the sacraments, though in this, as in so many other matters, it goes beyond the direct warrant of God's Word. Yet there is no question that it is regarded as one of the most solemn acts of human life. There is no authority which of itself can dissolve the tie: 'What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' 'Until death us do part' is the solemn vow. All revelation and the distinct words of Christ imply the sacredness of this bond, and it will be a sign of coming downfall in any country when the inviolability of this relationship is disregarded.

¶ All spiritual marriage has God as its foundation; that is, has love as its basis. Here, as on the physical plane, there is only one basis for marriage. . . . Spiritual marriages are the marriages for eternity. For two souls uniting and blending as one through the power of love there can be no separation, either in time or eternity. Whom God hath joined together, no man can put asunder. They were created one in the beginning; there is no chance or haphazard in God's plan. There is a spiritual affinity between the soul of man and the soul of woman. Only one thing will disclose this affinity—the power of pure and unselfish love in the souls of both. No animal desire, no earthly consideration; love and love alone—love that thinketh no evil, love that suffereth long and is kind, love that flows from the soul of the universe into the soul of man, this is the undying factor in all real marriage. Man may not annul this or set it aside, and all that man can do through rite or ceremonial shall not add to it.[2]

[1] G. Cannan, *The Release of the Soul*, 70.
[2] C. B. Patterson, *Dominion and Power*, 225.

¶ The highest state I define as that state through and in which man can know most of God, and work most for God: and this I assert to be the marriage state. He can know most of God, because it is through those family ties, and by those family names, that God reveals Himself to man, and reveals man's relations to Him. Fully to understand the meaning of 'a Father in Heaven' we must be fathers ourselves; to know how Christ loved the Church we must have wives to love, and love them; else why has God used those relations as symbols of the highest mysteries which we (on the Romish theory) are the more saintly the less we experience of them? And it is a historic fact, that just the theologic ideas which a celibate priesthood have been unable to realize in their teaching are those of the Father in Heaven—the Husband in Heaven. I will only now add an entreaty that you will forgive me if I have seemed too dogmatic. But God has showed me these things in an eventful and blissful marriage history, and woe to me if I preach them not.[1]

3. The relationship is one of *mutual honour*. That is to say, there is to be no superior advantage on either side, and this can be asserted without any fear of contradicting the teachings of the Apostle Paul, or infringing upon the just rights of woman. Some persons have found considerable difficulty in reconciling their minds to the exhortations which occur in Paul's Epistles, because they say that they imply that the wife is to occupy an inferior, if not a degrading, position. They have gone so far as to maintain that only a man could have so written, and that he reflects the prejudices of his age. It might be no unprofitable employment for those who indulge in such criticisms to make themselves familiar with the advantage which Christianity has conferred on the female sex, and especially through the teachings of this Apostle. Let them compare the position the woman occupied among the Greeks and

[1] Charles Kingsley, *His Letters and Memories of his Life*, i. 154.

Romans and other heathen nations with that which she enjoys amongst us to-day, and remember that the difference is owing to the influence of a Christian truth. That ought to be sufficient to silence their loud, unwise speech. Instead of being man's slave, woman is by right of her union with Christ the equal of man, for in Christ Jesus 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'

¶ The idea and place of woman have been slowly and laboriously elevated by the Gospel: and their full development has constituted the purest and most perfect protest, that the world has ever seen, against the sovereignty of force. . . . Now it is nowhere written in Holy Scripture that God is knowledge, or that God is power, while it is written that God is love: words which appear to set forth love as the central essence, and all besides as attributes. Woman then holds of God, and finds her own principal development in that which is most Godlike. Thus, therefore, when Christianity wrought out for woman, not a social identity, but a social equality, not a rivalry with the function of man, but an elevation in her own function reaching as high as his, it made the world and human life in this respect also a true image of the Godhead.[1]

¶ Love and respect woman. Seek in her not merely a comfort, but a force, an inspiration, the redoubling of your intellectual and moral faculties.

Cancel from your minds every idea of superiority over woman. You have none whatsoever.

Long prejudice, an inferior education, and a perennial legal inequality and injustice, have created that *apparent* intellectual inferiority which has been converted into an argument of continued oppression.

Consider woman, therefore, as the partner and companion, not merely of your joys and sorrows, but of your thoughts, your aspirations, your studies, and your endeavours after social amelioration. Consider her your equal in your civil and political life. Be ye the two human wings that lift the soul towards the ideal we are destined to attain.[1]

[1] Gladstone, *Studies on Homer*, ii.

4. The relationship is one of *mutual responsibility*. The man has vowed that he will love, comfort, honour, and keep his wife in sickness and in health; and she has declared her determination to obey, serve, love, honour, and keep him in sickness and in health; and those words cover all possible necessities and all possible circumstances.

¶ Touching was the devotion of Lady Hamilton to the service of her husband, the late Sir William Hamilton, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh. After he had been stricken by paralysis through overwork at the age of fifty-six, she became hands, eyes, mind, and everything to him. She identified herself with his work, read and consulted books for him, copied out and corrected his lectures, and relieved him of all business which she felt herself competent to undertake. Indeed, her conduct as a wife was nothing short of heroic; and it is probable that but for her devoted and more than wifely help, and her rare practical ability, the greatest of her husband's works would never have seen the light. He was by nature unmethodical and disorderly, and she supplied him with method and orderliness. His temperament was studious but indolent, while she was active and energetic. She abounded in the qualities which he most lacked. He had the genius, to which her vigorous nature gave the force and impulse.

When Sir William Hamilton was elected to his Professorship, after a severe and even bitter contest, his opponents, professing to regard him as a visionary, predicted that he could never teach a class of students, and that his appointment would prove a total failure. He determined, with the help of his wife, to justify the choice of his supporters, and to prove that his enemies were false prophets. Having no stock of lectures on hand, each lecture of the first course was written out day

[1] C. W. Stubbs, *God and the People*, 104.

by day, as it was to be delivered on the following morning. His wife sat up with him night after night, to write out a fair copy of the lectures from the rough sheets, which he drafted in the adjoining room. 'On some occasions,' says his biographer, 'the subject of the lectures would prove less easily managed than on others; and then Sir William would be found writing as late as nine o'clock in the morning, while his faithful but wearied amanuensis had fallen asleep on a sofa.'

Sometimes the finishing touches to the lecture were left to be given just before the class-hour. Thus helped, Sir William completed his course; his reputation as a lecturer was established; and he eventually became recognized throughout Europe as one of the leading intellects of his time.[1]

Christ and the Church.

Eph. v. 32.—'I speak concerning Christ and the church.'

We are all apt to take for granted the existing institutions and customs of our civilized life. It is much the same with the Church. It exists. We know it exists. It counts for something. It plays a part, certainly, in the life of its members. It is an undoubted factor in Western civilization. Without it Western history might not have been. It is often ignored, scorned, spurned, and yet if the Church disappeared it would be missed even by those most indifferent to its message and its service.

Yet we very rarely inquire as to the inner meaning of the Church. We are born into an environment of which the Church is a part. Why should the Church be at all? What is its relation to its Founder, and His relation to it? What are the essentials in churchmanship, and what are the non-essentials? Is there any common factor beneath all the bewildering denominational divisions which to-day break Christendom into a hundred fragments?

[1] Samuel Smiles, *Character*, 331.

Let us carry the appeal to the Founder of the Church. Jesus was the Founder of the Church; of that there is no doubt. Jesus foresaw (in what measure of detail we cannot say) the organization of a Church. Therefore it cannot be beside the mark to inquire what was in His mind in regard to some, at least, of the questions enumerated. Let us then, as indicative of His mind, consider first what we may call His ecclesiastical practice, and, secondly, His ecclesiastical teaching.

1. *The Ecclesiastical Practice of Christ.*—In His day, as we know, there was an elaborate ecclesiastical system among the Jews. Into that system He was born. There was a priesthood, very high ritual, a whole system of sacrifices associated with the central shrine in Jerusalem, the Temple. Side by side with that there was, as against the priestly, the prophetic aspect of the Jewish religion; there was worship, systematized instruction, the regular exposition of the law and the prophets. That was done in the synagogues scattered up and down the country and also by pious men who had taken special religious vows. There were feasts, ablutions and various ceremonials.

Jesus was brought up in connection with these religious observances. We know very little of His bringing up, but what little we do know indicates that at least He was plunged as a child, as a boy, as a growing man, into the midst of this ecclesiastical system of the Jews. On the eighth day He was circumcised. His mother went up to the Temple for purification. They made an annual journey to Jerusalem for the Passover, and later, when Jesus came to years of discretion, so far from discarding the associations of His early environment, He submitted to many of the requirements of the Jewish religion. He submitted to baptism. He observed the Passover. 'As his custom was,' it is written, He attended the Sabbath worship of the Synagogue. On such occasions He talked as custom allowed and the need arose. When He was placed on His trial before the chief priests and challenged as to

what His teaching was, He declared that He had taught openly in the synagogue and in the Temple. That is to say, for the most part He found established religious usage of value. He adopted it. He utilized it. In the main Jesus conformed. He was not a nonconformist just for the sake of being a dissident. Yet we cannot read far in the Gospels without discovering that He was a nonconformist; He did not observe all the cumbersome details of religious ceremonial which had been evolved down the centuries by ecclesiastical pundits. He even encouraged His disciples to disregard certain detailed formulae and regulations, always with this qualification: not for the mere sake of being a revolutionary or a rebel. There was nothing of that in Jesus Christ. He did encourage them to disregard these things in so far as they were a barrier—and they often were—to real religion, or to the supplying of human need. So in regard to ceremonial washing: Why do the disciples eat with unwashed hands? The answer was, Because human need requires it. So in regard to works of mercy on the Sabbath: though they be sin to the Jewish law, all that must go in the presence of human necessity.

Again, unlike so many of His contemporaries, Jesus held no special sanctity, either of place or of person. He taught in the synagogues. True, but we know that with equal readiness He taught from the prow of a boat, the rocky hillside, a little cottage, a knot of people by the wayside: to Him all places were equal because they were all God-created, all under the ægis of the Father's providence. There was no distinction in His mind between consecrated and unconsecrated. 'The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem'—places held sacred by men—'worship the Father. . . . The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.' If that was true of places, it was equally true of persons. His whole ecclesiastical practice is rooted in the fact that Jesus was not a cleric. All men to Him were the children of God, sinful, disobedient children, gone astray like lost sheep, but still children of the Eternal. Therefore any claim to special or official holiness on the part of ecclesiastical officials was plainly *ultra vires*.

2. *The Ecclesiastical Teaching of Christ.*—Now, what the underlying principle of Jesus' religious practice was is seen when we turn in the second place to His ecclesiastical teaching. Some people will tell you there was none. Certainly it is very meagre in form. Very little is said about the Church in the Gospels. What is said, however, is significant, and what is more, it is entirely adequate and sufficient. The word 'Church' occurs only three times in the recorded teaching of Jesus, and twice in a single passage. The word 'Church' is just the English translation of the Greek word 'ecclesia,' which means an assembly or congregation gathered together by being called out. The Christian Church, or assembly, consists of Christian men and women called out from the world in spirit and in truth, then bound together as an organization by a common impulse. That common impulse is indicated in a familiar passage of the Gospel story. We are all familiar with the words, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.' But there is a subtle distinction in the Greek that is not preserved in the English. It is a great pity it is not preserved. Thou art Peter, 'Petros,' a fragment of rock; and upon this 'petra,' the bedrock from which the fragment is broken, upon that—not upon Peter, not upon the fragment, not upon 'Petros,' but upon 'petra,' I will build my Church. Peter had just confessed Jesus as the Son of God. His human nature had adored the divine in Jesus. Deep had called unto deep, and the human heart of Peter had responded. Then said Jesus, on that human nature of which thou art a fragment I will build my Church. Upon human nature responsive to the divine in Christ, adoring God in Christ, it is founded. That is to say, the impulse which should bring and bind the Church together, call them out from the world and make them into the Church of Jesus Christ, was common human response to

the Godhead—there is no other word—the Godhead of Jesus Christ.

That is the one and only characteristic of the Church indicated by Jesus. Where is any other? We cannot have a Church without that. All else is non-essential. It does not mean that everything else is unimportant, without value. Theologians, however, distinguish between the 'esse' and the 'bene esse.' People called out by their human response to the Christ: that is the 'esse.' 'Bene esse' means things which minister to its well-being but are not absolutely essential: things like policy, a particular form of government.

The Church is not to be identified with any one of these non-essentials, because the true Church can exist either with them or without them. You have the Quaker meeting on the one side, and on the other side the Roman mass. There are two extremes. Both of them may be expressions of the true catholic Church—catholic with a small 'c,' in its proper sense—not because a minister is not there, not because the mass is there, but only in so far as the members are responsive to the divine in Jesus Christ.

But Jesus did more than indicate the basic principle of the Church. He foretold how that principle would work out. A Church, if it is truly based on devotion to Him, if it is responsive to God in His life—what then? It follows automatically that such an assembly will enshrine His spirit and give effect to His will. Paul spoke of the Church as the body of Christ. We know of whom and to whom he applied that term: an actual institution at Corinth, and such an institution it was! Vice of a most loathsome and disgusting order right in the midst of the Church at Corinth, disputes and dissensions and squabbles and quarrelling! Yet to that Church at Corinth with all its human failings, while rebuking it, Paul says, 'Know ye not that ye are the body of Christ?' What is the body for? It is to express the will. The Church is called to be the social incarnation of Christ's will. There was that personal incarnation, stamped upon the page of history nineteen hundred years ago. The Incarnation we call it, because it was the only perfect embodiment of the mind, will, spirit and purpose of Almighty God. The Church in all ages is called not merely to proclaim Christ's will but to embody Christ's will.

Christ's will may be proclaimed, God helping him, through the mind and lip of the preacher who seeks to be faithful; but you cannot socially incarnate the will of Christ except in a society, and the Church is a Divine society, an antetype of the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. So by the very terms of her existence the Church is bound to accept the solemn obligation of the Christian ethic. Whatever may be the case in the world at large, with its inadequate comprehension of Christian values, and its semi-paganized civilization, the Church has one binding law—the ethic of Jesus Christ.

For instance, 'One is your Father,' said Jesus, 'and all ye are brethren.' Well, what then? What follows? This, for the Church: the Church, the membership of the Church, all kinds of social differences, national differences, differences of race and colour, are all sunk in the fundamental unity of the Church members as children of God.

Again, 'Whosoever would be great among you, let him be your servant.' The Greek of that signifies your 'bond-slave.' What does that mean for the Church? There is no place in the Christian society—none whatever—for artificial worldly standards, whether titular or monetary. The only title to prominence is service.

Or, go through the Sermon on the Mount, if you want the ethical rule of Christianity. We are to love. Again and again the Gospel rings with that great word 'love.' We have degraded it. We have made of it a burlesque. It needs to be lifted into the presence of the eternal. Love your neighbour? Yes, but more than your neighbour—your enemy, who does not love you. We are to forgive. We are not to retaliate. We are to be generous. We are to kill strife by refusing to strive. Such injunctions are deemed impracticable by the world, but it is only Christian people who can act in a Christian spirit. You can-

not impose the Christian ethic from without on people who are not Christians. It is the law for the Church because the Church has accepted the lordship of Christ. However impractical to the world, they are the immutable law of the Church, which is the body of Christ.

There is just one thing more to be said. This is a tremendous thing to be and do. It is difficult in the world; it is difficult even in the Church. Therefore what? This Christian witness, this embodiment of the will of Jesus Christ can only be maintained by vital contact with God. There is no other way. Human nature in and by itself is not sufficient for these things. The whole tragedy of human history lies there. It is in God that our strength may be found. Therefore worship, prayer, edification, as the New Testament calls it, the building up of men and women in Christ-likeness, are all an integral part of the Church's life and activity. These are not ends in themselves. We do not worship and come to Church and sing hymns and engage in prayer as a kind of spiritual luxury. They are only means whereby a Church can become an embodiment of the life and love of her Divine Master, and so commend to the world the Gospel which she embodies.[1]

Obedience in the Home.

Eph. vi. 1.—'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.'

This is a word that is very far from being as simple as it looks. For why should St. Paul tell children to obey their parents? We thought that the children of the city of Ephesus and of the other Greek and Roman cities round about always obeyed their parents. And so they did. And, if in any instance they did not, such disobedience was at the risk of their lives. For we must remember that in those stern days a child belonged to his father much as to-day a dog belongs to us; and woe to the child that disobeyed his father! Why, then, should St. Paul tell the children to obey their parents?

Here is the reason. Greek and Roman civilization was being attacked by a power that rose in a little city in Galilee, by none other than Jesus of Nazareth. St. Paul came in that power and with that power to city after city. Even now, as St. John the Baptist said only a few years before, 'the axe is laid unto the root of the trees.' That axe—the gospel of Jesus Christ—was in the Apostle's hands and he used it freely. The institution of the family, as it existed in the Greek cities, was one of the many trees against which that axe was hurled. These words alone show not only that the old institution of the family was being destroyed, but that a new idea of the family—the Christian one—was replacing it. The gospel that St. Paul preached was the gospel of liberty. 'The truth shall make you free,' said Jesus. And St. Paul preached it. 'If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,' said our Lord again. And that 'glorious liberty of the children of God' St. Paul preached.

His congregations in those Greek cities were, of course, mixed ones—men and women, old and young. And who would be the most ready to receive his message? Undoubtedly the young—the children, especially the grown-up children of, say, the ages of fifteen to twenty-five. These had begun to think; and some of these rejoiced at a gospel which freed them from the tyranny of their parents. 'Now we are free; we need not obey,' they would say joyfully to one another. But the more serious-minded of them would accept the message of the Apostle in its fullness. 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right,' or, in other words, 'You children may be Christian and your parents may be pagan; nevertheless, obey them.'

We see, then, that the children whom St. Paul addresses in this letter were not children in the usual sense; they were, rather, grown-up sons and daughters—sons and daughters who were free in the freedom wherewith Christ had made them free. How can this be otherwise? St. Paul would not tell boys and girls of ten and twelve to obey their

[1] L. Richards.

parents when there was no fear of their ever disobeying. Neither is it right to take these familiar words, 'Children, obey your parents,' and apply them to-day as we usually do to boys and girls under twelve. They were not for children of that age then, nor are they really for children of that age now. Moreover, it is practically useless to tell children to obey their parents. What is of use—nay, of the highest urgency and necessity—is to tell parents to insist on the obedience of their children.

Times have changed very much since St. Paul's day. The old Greek and Roman institution of the family with its stern strictness has gone, and the Christian institution of the family has not taken its place, hence the fearful chaos of our homes. They are neither Greek nor Christian. We have overthrown the one and not built up the other. It is to parents that this word particularly comes; for in St. Paul's day it was the children (grown-up ones) who were probably Christian, and their parents were heathen, pagan. To-day the parents are nominally Christian, and their families are often wild, untutored, untrained, pagan in many of their ways.

See, then, that your children obey you. You wish them to keep the Fifth Commandment: 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' How can they? How will they? Never in this world till their parents are worthy of honour. But it is upon one matter of honour that our text speaks—namely, the worth of obedience.

Here are two very simple rules: first, let your orders to children be few. How can a child remember a thousand and one orders? Impossible. 'Don't do this' and 'Don't do that' come after one another as rapidly as the shot from a machine-gun; and most of them miss the mark. You can't follow them up. You forget, and the child forgets, what the commands were. And so obedience is in jeopardy from the very first. Begin to-day if your rule at home be slip-shod and practically non-existent. Begin to-day with but one command, or at the most two. You will remember and they will remember. Instead of the usual machine-gun method, use the rifle. Aim straight and direct with one shot. That is the first rule. Let your orders to children be very few.

The second is this: Insist on absolute obedience to these few—these one or two. So many parents command children to do what they cannot possibly do. Never give a command that you are not sure will be obeyed, and gradually you will become very careful in what you command. Such will be prompted only by wisdom and foresight, by love and consideration. It is you and not your children that are responsible for the carrying out of St. Paul's words.[1]

O'er wayward childhood would'st thou hold
  firm rule,
And sun thee in the light of happy faces;
Love, Hope, and Patience, these must be thy
  Graces,
And in thine own heart let them first keep
  school.
For as old Atlas on his broad neck places
Heaven's starry globe, and there sustains it,
  —so
Do these upbear the little world below
Of Education,—Patience, Love, and Hope.[2]

Children and Parents.

Eph. vi. 2.—'Honour thy father and mother.'

Why must a child honour his father and mother? Because, says St. Paul, it is 'right' that he should do so; or, in other words, it is according to nature, and to God's law expressed in nature, that he should do so.

There are three ways especially in which sons and daughters may honour their parents—by Reverence, Care, and Confidence.

1. *Reverence.*—Their superiority in age, and therefore in enlarged experience, demands that we should pay our parents reverence. Children do not know everything, though sometimes in the flush of young attainments they speak and act as though they did. It

[1] H. C. Libbey.
[2] Coleridge.

is amusing to watch how a budding intelligence that has just made itself familiar with some old-world fact will begin to instruct father and mother about it as though it were a recent discovery. But it is enough to stir one's righteous anger to hear the superlative pity which sons and daughters nowadays are not always slow to express with regard to their parents' views on matters in debate. Reverence there is none, and they even venture upon the supreme impertinence of openly laughing their parents' opinions to scorn.

¶ Of her Father Mrs. Carlyle always spoke with reverence; he was the only person who had any real influence over her. But, however wilful or indulged she might be, obedience to her parents—unquestioning and absolute—lay at the foundation of her life. She was accustomed to say that this habit of obedience to her parents was her salvation through life,—that she owed all that was of value in her character to this habit as the foundation. Her father, from what she told me, was a man of strong and noble character,—very true, and hating all that was false. She always spoke of any praise he gave her as of a precious possession. She loved him with a deep reverence; and she never spoke of him except to friends whom she valued. It was the highest token of her regard when she told any one about her father.[1]

¶ Ruskin comes to one's mind for the beautiful way in which he bore himself to his parents in the Denmark Hill home—'among the most beautiful things that dwell in my memory,' writes Mr. Harrison in his monograph. 'Towering as he did by his genius above his parents, who neither understood nor sympathised with his second career (dating from *Unto this Last*), he invariably behaved towards them with the most affectionate deference. He submitted without murmur to the rule of the house, which, on the Sabbath day, covered his beloved Turners with dark screens. This man, well past middle life, in all the renown of his principal works, who for a score of years had been one of the chief forces in the literature of the century, continued to show an almost childlike docility towards his father and his mother, respecting their complaints and remonstrances, and gratefully submitting to be corrected by their worldly wisdom and larger experience.'[1]

[1] Carlyle, *Reminiscences*, i. 59.

2. *Care.*—As to the second element in this word honour it ought to be needful to say very little. Christ distinctly asserts that there is no higher religious duty than that of providing for the temporal wants of parents. 'Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commandeth, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.' No words could more vividly emphasize the duty of children to support their parents than these from the lips of Jesus. That was an obligation to which He gave no second place. This form of honouring parents, however, is sometimes sadly forgotten. Children are often selfish. They will draw all they can, and as long as they can, from their parents. Instead of offering help they seem to imagine that they have a right to be helped. We have even known instances where children have drained away without scruple what little means of support the aged father or mother may have possessed, and have then left them to the cold mercies of the world's charity.

¶ When our parents grow old they exchange places, as it were, with us. There were years when we were feeble and helpless, unable to care for ourselves; then they cared for us. They watched over us; they toiled and sacrificed for us; they sheltered us from hardship and trial; they threw around our tender years love's sweetest gentleness and holiest protec-

[1] R. E. Welsh, *Man to Man*, 19.

tion. Now we are strong and they are feeble; we are able to endure hardship and toil, but the faintest breath of storm makes them tremble and the lightest toil wearies them. This is the time for us to repay them. It is ours now to show tenderness to them, to shelter them from trial, and to pour about them as much of love's tenderness as possible.

And canst thou, mother, for a moment think
That we thy children, when old age shall shed
Its blanching honours on thy weary head,
Could from our best of duties ever shrink?
Sooner the sun from his high sphere should sink
Than we, ungrateful, leave thee in that day
To pine in solitude thy life away,
Or shun thee, tottering on the grave's cold brink.
Banish the thought! Where'er our steps may roam,
O'er smiling plains or wastes without a tree,
Still will fond memory point our hearts to thee,
And paint the pleasures of thy peaceful home;
While duty bids us all thy griefs assuage,
And smooth the pillow of thy sinking age.[1]

3. *Confidence.*—As to the third element of honour it is only necessary to say—as far as in you lies let there be no barrier between you and your parents. Make them free of your secrets. Trust them absolutely. They deserve it of you, and will repay it as you grow older with a wealth of love and responsive confidence of which you, perhaps, now have no conception.

¶ There are no other friends in the world who have so much right to all the confidences of children as their own parents. There are no others in whose breasts these confidences will be so safe; they will never betray the trusts that are placed in them by their own children. There are no others who will take such deep interest in all the events of their daily lives.

[1] J. R. Miller, *The Path of Promise*, 63.

To the true mother nothing is trifling which has interested her child. She listens as eagerly to the story of its experiences, its joys, its disappointments, its plans, its imaginations, its achievements, as other people listen to the recital of some romantic narrative. She never laughs at its fancies, nor ridicules anything that it says or does. Then there are no other friends who are such safe and wise counsellors.[1]

¶ Sir Henry Jones, in a letter to his son, writes: There is one thing I want to say now, lest I forget it.

You know how your mother has to be kept, so far as possible, from all trying or disturbing news. You know, too, that she has always wanted Hal and me to exchange our little secrets, and is not one bit jealous, as most women would be, if Hal puts in a wee private note with *'For Dads'* on it.

Now, Jay, I'm behind you through good and ill, of every kind, to the end. There is nothing that you can ever suffer, whether from high or low, nothing in which you yourself may blunder, which will hold back my love and help for one moment. And heaven knows I've blundered enough myself, and ought to have been ten times bigger and better than I can ever be now. So don't hesitate, if you feel I can be of use and are impelled to make me your companion on the way, when the sky is dark and the heavens obscured. You know what I mean, my own boy.[2]

Obey and honour thus thy father and mother, for it is right, and it is the first commandment with promise. Notice that the appeal is made to you on the highest grounds first. Obedience is not an affair of selfish calculation, but is to be offered because it is right. But then let it be remembered that right-doing has its rewards. Providence is on the side of those who honour their parents, and they thereby lay the solid foundation of earthly happiness, and win the unspeakable approbation of God.

[1] J. R. Miller, *The Path of Promise*, 50.
[2] H. J. W. Hetherington, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Jones*, 230.

Chastening.

Eph. vi. 4.—'Bring them up in the nurture (RV 'chastening') and admonition of the Lord.'

Let us try to face this problem of chastening the child, *i.e.*, drawing out good and checking evil. It is one of the most delicate and complicated of problems, for the simple reason that there are no two children with whom exactly the same treatment will work. There is one thing, however, that should never be lost sight of, and that is the difference between obedience and mere submission; between doing a thing because it is right and doing it because one is forced to do it. The child has as real an inner life as we have. He has his own natural wishes and propensities, and he does not like to have those wishes and propensities crossed any more than we do. His will is the instrument God has given him to resist with, and to assert his own higher nature, and if you insist too often on making him do what he does not want to do, you may succeed in getting him to drop certain very objectionable practices, but at the same time you may accustom him to the fatal habit of giving in, of doing whatever it is easiest to do under the influence of threats of others, and you could do nothing more disastrous than that. Most of us, far from having too much will-power, have not half enough; we are always trying to copy other people instead of being ourselves. We do not want 'goody-goody' children—they are never any use in later life—we want strong, manly, determined children, who will not be easily led into evil. And therefore we ought not to trample on their powers of resistance, except when it is absolutely necessary: we should try to teach them, rather, to use their own wills in the right direction. We should try to show them that the strongest thing a boy can do is not always to insist on having his own way, or to do what is easiest at the moment. The strongest thing is to do what he feels to be right, no matter how much it goes against the grain.

¶ Goethe showed long ago in his *Werther* a clear understanding of the significance of individualistic and psychological training. . . . In this work he shows how the future power of will lies hidden in the characteristics of the child, and how along with every fault of the child an uncorrupted germ capable of producing good is enclosed. 'Always,' he says, 'I repeat the golden words of the teacher of mankind, "if ye do not become as one of these," and now, good friend, those who are our equals, whom we should look upon as our models, we treat as subjects; they should have no will of their own; do we have none? Where is our prerogative? Does it consist in the fact that we are older and more experienced? Good God of Heaven! Thou seest old and young children, nothing else. And in whom Thou hast more joy, Thy Son announced ages ago. But people believe in Him and do not hear Him—that, too, is an old trouble, and they model their children after themselves.'

The new belief is really equivalent to Goethe's thoughts given above, *i.e.*, that almost every fault is but a hard shell enclosing the germ of virtue. Even men of modern times still follow in education the old rule of medicine, that evil must be driven out by evil, instead of the new method, the system of allowing nature quietly and slowly to help itself, taking care only that the surrounding conditions help the work of nature. This is education.

Neither harsh nor tender parents suspect the truth expressed by Carlyle when he said that the marks of a noble and original temperament are wild, strong emotions, that must be controlled by a discipline as hard as steel. People either strive to root out passions altogether, or they abstain from teaching the child to get them under control.[1]

1. First of all, let your children feel that you expect them to do what is right. It is wonderful how stimulating it is to have to live up to a reputation. Do not be constantly saying: 'Do not do this; do not do that.'

[1] Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child*, 106.

As human nature is constituted, the very fact of being told not to do a thing often creates the desire to do it. If you give a child a new toy to play with, so long as he is interested in the toy he is too busy to think of anything else. And if, instead of telling him not to do something naughty, you ask him to do something good, the chances are he will have no time to be naughty.

¶ Dr. Jowett was a man who had learned this secret. It was at one of the earliest of his special children's services that an amusing incident occurred, which provided him with a platform story. He had just started his address when some boys who had surreptitiously crept into a seat at the back of the hall began a shrill obligato on penny whistles. A steward caught them and led them to the vestry. Four of them with hangdog countenances and downcast eyes were standing in a row when Jowett entered. He was told that they were the dire offenders. But Jowett had not worked alongside Henry Drummond in his spiritual clinics at Edinburgh without learning the art of dealing with bad lads. He strode towards them and with contempt in his tone asked, 'Can't you fellows play on tin whistles better than that? If you can't I shall have to get Mrs. Jowett to give you some lessons.' Trepidation fled from the boys' faces. Their eyes beamed back. The upshot of the incident was that a few weeks later four boys trooped on the platform at the children's service and played a quartette on tin whistles to Mrs. Jowett's accompaniment on the pianoforte. Jowett had them enslaved after that.[1]

2. Secondly, remember that, as a rule, a child's feelings are extraordinarily sensitive. You can either very easily wound them, or, if you know how, you can win your way right into the little boy's or girl's heart. There is nothing more destestable than a spoiled child, but it sometimes takes one all one's time to sit quietly and watch the unmerciful way in which parents will pounce on a poor child for some quite trifling fault. It would do them all the good in the world to be treated in a similar manner for a few days, without being allowed to open their mouths in self-defence. And really it is the worst possible way of getting anyone to improve. Even when we are wrong, it is not at all easy to bear being told so; in fact, among those of us who are grown up there is no surer way of getting us to persist in wrongdoing than by pulling us up sharply. If either we or the children are to be won to a better frame of mind, it must be by gentleness.

¶ To bring up a child means carrying one's soul in one's hand, setting one's feet on a narrow path; it means never placing ourselves in danger of meeting the cold look on the part of the child that tells us without words that he finds us insufficient and unreliable. It means the humble realisation of the truth that the ways of injuring the child are infinite, while the ways of being useful to him are few. How seldom does the educator remember that the child, even at four or five years of age, is making experiments with adults, seeing through them, with marvellous shrewdness making his own valuations and reacting sensitively to each impression. The slightest mistrust, the smallest unkindness, the least act of injustice or contemptuous ridicule, leave wounds that last for life in the finely strung soul of the child. While on the other side unexpected friendliness, kind advances, just indignation, make quite as deep an impression on those senses which people term as soft as wax but treat as if they were made of cowhide.[1]

Child-soul is a little city
With its gates ajar,
Yet, to enter to its centre
I must travel far.
'Tis not an easy thing to win
The right to move and walk therein,
Though not to do so were a sin;
And I'll get in!

Child-soul has a little garden
Cloistered round with care.
And all my will and utmost skill
I'll need to get in there.

[1] A. Porritt, *J. H. Jowett*, 62.

[1] Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child*, 114.

So rich the soil that waiting lies;
But I must seek anointed eyes,
And delve before the dewdrop dries,
Oh, I'll be wise!

Child-soul has a little temple
Opening on the street.
Curtained so deep, it seems asleep.
'Tis shut to tourists' feet.
Oh, little temple, glistening bright:
What if my hand be clean and white
Enough to lift your curtain right,
And let in—Light![1]

3. When every allowance has been made, however, a child must sometimes be reproved: he cannot be permitted simply to do what he likes, or he will be utterly spoiled. In such circumstances parents must choose the right moment for speaking. If you wish to get a grown-up person to do something for you, you watch for your opportunity, and you go to him when you think he will be in a good humour to listen to you. Why not use the same tact with a child? To reprove him in the presence of others and while he is naughty, while his feelings are excited, and while possibly yours are also, is to reprove him under the least favourable conditions, and it should be done at such a moment only if postponement is impossible. In most cases it would be better to wait for a little, till he is snugly in bed, and then talk to him in a quiet, firm, but friendly way, pointing out where he was wrong, and making him feel that you hope he will do better next time. 'If you try, you can.' A few encouraging words like that, spoken in the right way (never lugubriously), will do more to brace him up than all the scolding in the world. If he has any proper feeling about him he will love you all the more for what you have said, and he will determine to show you that he can do more than you expect from him. And even if his good resolutions should not be carried out, remember, it is not an easy thing to give up a bad habit, and very few of us do it without many struggles first. The moment you see any improvement, let him know that you see it. Children, as well as other people, are the better of a little encouragement now and then.

¶ A memory of his boyhood which, he said, never lost its colour or its strength was the memory of his mother reproving him in tears. 'Punishment might have been bearable, but I could have faced it. But tears, they vanquished me. A mother's suffering for a son's disloyalty to truth—that was something that made my act repulsive, and at the same time revealed to me a heart of love and reconciliation and peace.'[1]

¶ Leech had an original and effective method of reprimanding his children. If their faces were distorted by anger, by a rebellious temper, or a sullen mood, he took out his sketch-book, transferred their lineaments, with a slight exaggeration, to paper, and showed them, to their shameful confusion, how ugly naughtiness was![2]

[1] Fay Inchfawn.

Parents and Children.

Eph. vi. 4.—'Bring them up (RV 'nurture them') in the nurture (RV 'chastening') and admonition of the Lord.'

THERE is no duty the claims of which will be more readily acknowledged, or the neglect of which will expose a man to more severe and merited condemnation, than that of the parent to the child. It needs no argument to establish it, for it is the natural outgrowth of one of the purest and deepest instincts of the heart. No right-minded man needs to be convinced of his obligations to his child, for he welcomes them, and, instead of feeling them to be a burden, finds in their discharge one of his sweetest pleasures.

1. Try to estimate children's worth. As God's gifts they possess an inestimable value. Nothing He sends can be worthless. The humblest flower which He pencils into beauty by a ray of sunshine is not to be overlooked.

[1] A. Porritt, *J. H. Jowett*, 8.
[2] *The Memories of Dean Hole*, 37.

Of every work that bears the mark of His creative touch, however insignificant, the exhortation may be uttered, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.' How much more shall it be said—and said by the Master of men Himself—of those little flowers of humanity that spring up and bud and blossom in our homes.

How sacred they are, these budding men and women! What a nature they possess! What complex creatures! Body, soul, spirit—with all imaginable possibilities wrapped up in them. The hopes of two worlds, of time and eternity, meet in every child born into our homes. If the Bible be a true revelation, not only of the character and will of God, but of our nature and its destinies, then each little one that comes into life is of infinite worth. Have we ever realized as completely as we might do what they are and may become? If we have attempted this, then all relationships in which they may stand to us are as nothing compared with this, that they may become heirs of immortality and eternal life. What is the family name, or estate, or business? what all the best prizes they may wring from the world? what our temporary comfort and joy to which they can minister, in view of them as 'sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty'? Here is the root of all right treatment and the education of child nature. As we estimate their worth, so shall we act towards and for them. Surely we shall feel that a treasure, a pearl of great price, is entrusted to our keeping in every child we have—a young soul to be trained for God and an eternal life.

¶ What a vocation is this of parents and teachers! In their hands as in no others lie the reins of the chariot of God. In the nature of things, the kingdom of God must grow chiefly by securing control of young life. The religious impulse must be fed and it must be led on to realise its full manhood through voluntary obedience to Christ. This is religious education. It controls the stream at its source. The broad river of humanity is what it is made to be in the home and in the school of whatever kind. Parents and teachers are making history; they are making or unmaking civilisation; they are promoting or holding back the triumph of God's kingdom upon the earth. They are doing this whether they will or no. The young life that touches their life is plastic. It takes the shape of that with which it comes into contact. Every parent, every teacher, and indeed every person who has any relation to young life has therefore a divine vocation. He is set apart, chosen, to reveal God. This is true of irreligious as well as religious parents, of teachers in the week-day school as well as teachers in the Sunday school. Whoever is placed where he moulds the life of a child or youth, however he came to be so placed, is bound to this service.[1]

2. Try to appreciate the power of your influence. It is evident that there is no relationship in which a man exerts so much power for good or evil. The man who has to deal with multitudes, the employer who has hundreds or thousands of work-people dependent upon him and affected more or less by his spirit or example, the statesman who is the leader of a great party or the ruler of a mighty nation, and whose words and deeds are seeds ever rich with fruit, the preacher who by his eloquence can sway the hearts of great congregations—each of these has, of course, a more widespread influence. It is of the quality rather than the amount of influence, its intensity, not its extension, of which we speak. From that point of view there is no force brought to bear in the formation of character that may be—ought to be—so potent as that of the parent on the child. As a matter of fact, that influence may be so badly or imperfectly exercised that the child may afterward have to thank someone of better spirit who frees his spirit from the evil which parental teaching or example has wrought; or, on the other hand, some evil power from without may neutralize the effect of a parent's wise training. Thus the determining power on the character and life may come from an entirely different source. But this does not make it the less

[1] G. A. Coe, *Education in Religion and Morals*, 39.

true that there is no influence which a man may exert over any other human being equal to that which he may exercise over his child. There is no other from whom the child receives so many of the ideas, impressions, and habits which are most abiding.

What, then, we ask ourselves, is the kind of influence that goes forth from us? Is it healthy, moral, spiritual? Do our children learn from us to honour and to attain the highest principles? Do they see that we, as Christian men and women, esteem godliness and truth above all other things? Or do they see that money, business, fashion, pleasure, physical luxuries, or intellectual gifts are the things we value most? They are certain to make the discovery, attempt to disguise our real aims and purposes as we may. They, with the surest instinct, will penetrate all our paltry pretences; they, with unerring truthfulness, will weigh our realities against our professions, and what we count best they will probably seek to acquire. Let our influence be such as to nurture in them a fervent love of what is right because it is right, and a profound abhorrence of all that is mean, selfish, double-minded, impure, un-Christlike. Then will their minds respond with quick sensitiveness to all forms of goodness, and turn with spontaneous hatred from that which is contrary to uprightness and truth.

3. Try to recognize the limits of your authority. A father and mother ought to rule in the household—their will is to be law within certain clear limits. In the earliest stages of life they stand to the children in the place of God—that is, from the parents comes the only authoritative guidance which the young hearts are able to acknowledge. Knowing nothing of any Divine revelation, unable to discern between good and evil, needing direction at every step, the father's and mother's will is their sole law. This is exercised in a certain sense arbitrarily. There is no chance of appeal. Submission becomes inevitable, for if the word of decision is not sufficient to secure obedience there are physical forces that can compel obedience. Parental rule, therefore, is almost autocratic. But it has its very decided limits.

(1) 'Admonition' is a father's duty, but it is to be that 'of the Lord.' The authority may seem arbitrary to the child, but it has no right to be so. No child is to be subjected to mere whim, caprice, mood, or misconception. No law is to be laid down for the household which has not in its spirit and principle a warrant from God Himself. No father has the right ever to say, 'I am determined that this or that shall be done because I have willed it,' but his command is to have reason and authority because it is a declaration of the will of God. The whole process of instruction and discipline must be that which He prescribes and which He administers, so that His authority may be brought into constant and immediate contact with the mind, heart, and conscience of the child. It will not do for the parent to present himself as the ultimate end, the source of knowledge, the possessor of authority to determine truth and duty. This would be to give his child a mere human development. Nor will it do for him to urge and communicate everything on the abstract ground of reason, for that would be to merge his child in Nature. It is only by making God —God in Christ—the Teacher and Ruler on whose authority everything is to be believed, and in obedience to whose will everything is to be done, that the ends of education can possibly be attained. This is the child's safeguard against the imposition of any law that would be hurtful or injurious, physically, morally, or spiritually. The parent has no right to demand what the Lord does not authorize, so that here is distinct limitation, beyond which we should never pass, and if we should pass it, resistance is right if resistance is possible. We have power delegated to us from God Himself to demand obedience, but only when our ruling is according to His law. Beyond that it is a sin to go.

(2) Again, our authority is limited by time. Possibly many of us have already discovered this. To our amazement, children have developed so rapidly into men and women, capable of forming their own judgments and

taking their own course, that we have not been prepared for it. Accustomed to treat them as needing guidance, to lay down laws for their conduct for so many years, bidding them go out or come in, it has dawned upon us with surprise when they have dared to dispute our will and act for themselves. But parents must recognize that a time will come when, instead of laying down laws, they are to offer advice. Authority must give place to counsel. Young men and women are to be responsible for themselves—they have wills and judgments of their own, which are to be respected; and though, if they are wise and loving, they will always be amenable to parental counsel, yet they have removed their necks from the yoke of authority.

¶ Parents often take as their moral right the services which should only be accepted, if accepted at all, as the offering of love and gratitude, and even reach a degree of domineering selfishness in which they refuse to believe that their children have any adult rights of their own, absorbing and drying up that physical and spiritual life-blood of their offspring which it is the parents' part in Nature to feed. If the children are willing there is nothing to mitigate this process; if they are unwilling the result is often a disastrous conflict. Their time and energy are not their own; their tastes are criticized and so far as possible crushed; their political ideas, if they have any, are treated as pernicious; and—which is often on both sides the most painful of all—differences in religious belief lead to bitter controversy and humiliating recrimination. Such differences in outlook between youth and age are natural and inevitable and right. The parents themselves, though they may have forgotten it, often in youth similarly revolted against the cherished doctrines of their own parents; it has ever been so, the only difference being that to-day, probably, the opportunities for variation are greater. So it comes about that what James Hinton said half a century ago is often true to-day: 'Our happy Christian homes are the real dark places of the earth.'

There ought to be no reason, and under happy conditions there is no reason, why the relationship between parent and child, as one of mutual affection and care, should ever cease to exist. But that the relationship should continue to exist as a tie is unnatural and tends to be harmful. At a certain stage in the development of the child the physical tie with the parent is severed, and the umbilical cord cut. At a later stage in development, when puberty is attained and adolescence is feeling its way towards a complete adult maturity, the spiritual tie must be severed. It is absolutely essential that the young spirit should begin to essay its own wings. If its energy is not equal to this adventure, then it is the part of a truly loving parent to push it over the edge of the nest. Of course there are dangers and risks. But the worst dangers and risks come of the failure to adventure, of the refusal to face the tasks of the world and to assume the full function of life. All that Freud has told of the paralysing and maiming influence of infantile arrest or regression is here profitable to consider. In order, moreover, that the relationship between parents and children may retain its early beauty and love, it is essential that it shall adapt itself to adult conditions and the absence of ties so rendered necessary. Otherwise there is little likelihood of anything but friction and pain on one side or the other, and perhaps on both sides.[1]

¶ Between R. L. Stevenson and his father, it is clear, there were strained relations for many a year; the former's journey to the Far West among the emigrants of the steerage and 'across the plains' in a colonist car was taken under stress of some such disfavour. The Nestor of Northern lighthouses, like other strong men of the older school of Scots, had his own ideas of what his son should be and do; he had evidently a good deal to bear from the young Bohemian errant; and, perhaps asking too much from the spirited youth, he got less in return than was due. This single instance stands for a large class of

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Little Essays of Love and Virtue*, 28.

cases in which the relations between the older folk and the sons of the house are very delicate and difficult. The younger generation is often out of sympathy with the older generation, in the household as well as in the state.

Like young Stevenson, the son fails perhaps to lay hold of one line of life, or is hot to take up the rights and liberties of manhood and cut the strings of family control. He goes into strange company, lives in the new world of his own time, and airs his up-to-date ideas. Naturally the father clings to the old ways and hoary ideas. He finds it difficult to allow for the 'boys' having grown up, and sometimes he expects to keep them of one mind and step with him, in spite of the differences in age and education and changing times. He is perhaps out of humour with the young world because it has gone away from him; he has fallen out of the life of the new times, and must 'move on' and give place to the younger generation which, as Ibsen puts it, is hammering at the doors to assume the place of power.[1]

¶ The realization of their children's development is sometimes hard for the parents. To quote Mr. King, 'The poets have sung of the joys of parenthood, but no one has yet—or rather, has very seldom—sung of the unseen tears shed by parents when their children, who have so long looked towards them for all the blessings of their lives, gain the strength of their own wings to fly thereon towards fresh scenes, towards fresh faces, towards those far horizons whither their parents cannot follow them, or follow them only in that imagination which belongs to love alone. I quote some verses from an author—too little known:—

But as he stood, the man soft murmuring
Looking, saying slow, 'It is my son, my son,
So straight of limb, so comely thus to see;
Now is the glory of my life begun.'

But when the night was still the woman went
Where slept the youth in his small room alone;
And from a hiding-place a casket drew,
With now a tear, and oft a stifled moan.

And from its perfumed hollow quick she brought
Two little shoes, and held them to her heart,
Staining them with tears, with many kisses cried,
'Oh, little feet that strayed from me apart!

Oh, little child that I shall see no more!'
She laid the casket in its hiding-place—
Then bent in prayer above her sleeping son,
Who smiled in dreaming of another face.'[1]

[1] R. E. Welsh, *Man to Man*, 17.

Masters and Servants.

Eph. vi. 5-9.—'Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.'

The words of the text refer to a state of society which in civilized countries has passed away. In the age of St. Paul the world was not divided into masters and servants, but into masters and slaves. There were slaves of many kinds: slaves working in the fields, slaves living in the house, artisans and craftsmen and clerks, tutors and nurses who had the care of children; slaves of all sorts, who ministered to the wants of their owners, or who were let out for hire. This was a state of society very different from ours, and not to be judged by our standard. It was not intolerable, for the slave was bound to the master by ties of affection and of habit; yet it had many evils. The slave and his master were not equal in the eye of the law, as are the poor and rich among ourselves; and they had not the light of liberty, which is the

[1] R. King, *Below the Surface*, 229.

greatest of God's blessings to man. But the slave's condition did not become worse in the course of ages; it gradually improved, and (partly through the influence of the Christian Church, partly from other causes) underwent a great change many centuries ago. It is a very interesting chapter in human history which tells how mankind passed from slavery to freedom, from being things to becoming persons, from being in the power of others to ordering their own life.

¶ As a sidelight upon the habits of the time we may recall the occasion on which, as is recorded, the host at a certain dinner party, in a sudden fit of passion, caused by a slave's clumsiness in waiting at table, ordered the man to be thrown to the lampreys in the pool which occupied the centre of the courtyard, as was common in wealthy Roman houses. The guests, we are told, were offended at this, not, be it noticed, because of the inhumanity of the deed, but because of the breach of good manners and decorum involved; the shrieks of the poor slave and the splashing he made in his terrible death agonies were distasteful to them on account of the vulgar noise, the disturbance of the well-bred calm of the feast; they considered that their host should have known better than do such an unseemly thing —but they had not the slightest pity for the poor victim of the atrocity. Such was the state of Roman society when Paul wrote.[1]

But what have we to do to-day with the relations that Paul thought should subsist under a system which is so remote from our own? The problems of Paul's day arose from the absolute dependence of slave on master: they arose from the fact that the slave had few or no inducements to industry and energy, and from the fact that the master, on his part, had so few restraints upon his behaviour. The problems of our day spring principally from the steady growth of independence on both sides. In the modern industrial world the master but seldom lives near his workmen, or knows how his workmen live. For better or worse the personal link has been broken. Once outside the factory, or workroom, the employé owns no obligation to the employer. Indeed, as we all know, the 'master' in most of our great modern industries is to-day a syndicate, or board of directors, and those whose interests are identical, and whose efforts should be in constant co-operation, are organized in two camps, and are sleeplessly vigilant to take advantage of one another's weaknesses or misfortunes. Moreover, even where independence is not absolute because the fear of being out of work exercises some restraint, independence of feeling is absolute.

Nevertheless the spirit of Paul's counsels is not of temporary validity alone, but admits of, and demands, application to all forms which the principle of authority may assume in this world.

1. *The Servant.*—Christianity has dignified and exalted the life of service. It was remembered of its Founder that He took upon Him the form of a servant; that He came not to be ministered unto but to minister; that His law for His disciples was that he who would be first must be servant of all. Pre-eminence in the Christian society implied supremacy in service. And, moreover, the relation between this life and the next was that the good and faithful servant here was made ruler over many things. Servant in this world, master in the world to come. On the other hand, he who would be greatest should be least of all. The Christian ideal is the ideal of service; to serve men is better than to rule men and to master men, though it is very possible to do both. It was, consequently, a further ideal in Christianity to save the world by serving it; by living for it; working for it, praying for it, dying for it. Christianity abolished the curse of slavery long before it abolished slavery. It freed the slave long before it abolished slavery. It rescued the slave from servitude and made him a servant. It freed his soul, and enfranchized his manhood. Before a man can put a soul into his work, he must have a soul to put into it. And Christ Jesus breathed a soul into men, and they, in turn, put that soul into their work.

[1] R. J. Campbell.

¶ When men are not only forbidden to work more than a certain number of hours a day, but are forbidden to lay more than a certain number of bricks per hour, there is a levelling down of character and ability and industry which must be prejudicial to the workmen. I have myself no objection to limiting hours when it can be done; but I assert the right of a man to make the most of his hours; I assert his right, and not more his right than his duty, to throw himself into his work, and do the best and the most that he can in the hours of service. I deny the right of any organization to suppress manhood, attenuate individuality, and discourage industry and enthusiasm and interest in what is, after all, a life-work, demanding the best powers a man can bring to it. I am solemnly convinced that the Labour movement of to-day must add to its undoubted sympathy with the labourer a high sense of the dignity and responsibility of labour, and the value of labour to the labourer. For, as Dr. Dale once said, a man's highest and best wages are not those he receives every Saturday or Quarter-day: they are the wages God gives, the interest which He pays on every sound investment of life and ability in His service—increase of power, character, manhood, soul. 'Whatsoever good thing,' says the Apostle, 'each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free.' [1]

¶ How much work must I give for my pay is always a question which it is not easy for economic philosophy to settle. Give to your service the energy that you would give to Christ; put it on altogether higher and firmer ground. Give your best, because it is the Lord's work you are doing; it is the Lord's 'Well done' you are winning; it is the Lord's wage you will receive at last. Do your work thoroughly, not the seen part of it only, but the unseen, which is mostly the most important; and, whether human eyes are upon you or not, one eye is upon you, the eye of One whose work on earth strained His energy to the utmost, and left Him hardly time to eat bread. Work because God sent you to work; because God watches your work; because God makes work the bond of fellowship of spirits; it is the workers who work with a will, who never skulk or shirk their tasks, moral or material, who will gather at last with honour there. Be diligent. Work as if you loved it, for ye serve the Lord Christ.[1]

2. *The Master.*—It ought to be recognized that it is more difficult to be a Christian as a master than as a servant. The temptation in every position of authority is to be proud, arbitrary, harsh. Probably the most difficult lesson to learn in life is the use of power. Moreover, a master has commonly become one by special force of character and ability, and this is apt to make him unsympathetic, inconsiderate, with men of slower wit or less energy. It is not everyone who, like Dr. Arnold, could say that the noblest sight on earth to him was God's blessing resting on an inferiority of talent, where a dull boy was doing his utmost at his work. It is commonly supposed that the failure of at least one of our Generals in the late war was because he expected all his subordinates to be equal to himself in physical endurance. He was demanding the impossible of them, and so a critical enterprise failed. The mistress who complains of certain work being undone, and gives as justification of her complaint 'I could have done it myself,' may be perfectly right, but she may not. She may not be taking into consideration deficiency of physical energy and vitality, or the skill and rapidity which are often a result of training. The man who said that a thing most necessary in our life of to-day is that the poor should know how hard the rich men work said a true thing. But it is necessary to remember also that the rich are better fed and clothed and housed, and so physically fitted for harder work; apart from the fact that they get more out of it. Dickens might easily have drawn a portly, elephantine manager keeping some thin, delicate, half-starved clerk working

[1] C. S. Horne, *Relationships of Life*, 94.

[1] J. B. Brown.

through the midnight hours, saying to him, 'I ask no one to do what I do not do myself.'

¶ I have sometimes pictured to myself an additional scene in the great act prophesied in Matt. xxv. The master of a huge London business house was summoned before the great White Throne. He looked to me like a composite photograph, from which we may perhaps infer that he was really a syndicate rather than an individual. I noticed, however, that he was treated as if the responsibility was personal to him. 'I was once behind your counter,' the Lord said, 'I was delicate, the work was hard, but you provided no stool for me to sit on; and when an Act was passed to secure one for me, you took care to make it a dead letter.' The manager was about to protest. 'Lord, when saw I Thee,' he was beginning, but the Lord stopped him. 'I lived on your premises,' the Lord continued, 'but on Sundays you turned me out into the streets to shift for myself from morning till night; you cared nothing as to what became of me.' 'But,' the manager broke in, 'when saw I Thee?' Again the Lord motioned him to be silent. 'An agreement had almost been arrived at for earlier closing of places of business, but you stood out against it. You said you, yourself, had physical strength enough without that sort of thing, and what was good enough for you was good enough for them. And I was there, in the person of a sensitive, delicate country girl. I needed the air and the exercise. Before your eyes I faded like a flower.' Then said the manager again, 'Lord, when saw I Thee in my employ?' 'Inasmuch,' said the Christ, 'as ye did such things to the least of these my brethren, ye did them unto me.'[1]

[1] C. S. Horne, *Relationships of Life*, 98.

Simplicity.

Eph. vi. 5.—'In singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.'

2 Cor. xi. 3.—'The simplicity . . . that is toward Christ.'

THESE are two beautiful and refreshing phrases, and they represent very truly something of freshness that Christianity gave to a world satiated with sin.

When we look back to reconsider, and, if it may be, to recapture for ourselves, the primal ideas which Christ came on earth to revivify for men, there is one that seems to us to stand first of them, perhaps to overshadow them—simplicity, singleness of heart. The single eye, the single heart, those Christ called for: they alone could see and know Him. And so it is again that St. Paul speaks. His fear is that his converts, over whom he is jealous with a godly jealousy, may be withdrawn from the pure gospel of the Life of Jesus which he placarded before them to another Jesus, a different spirit, a different gospel—things quite possible to preach and very easily leading astray—and may be beguiled and corrupted from the simplicity, the purity, that is towards Christ.

That is the first and perpetual appeal of the Church of Christ. Here is a Divine character, a Divine life, set forth; here is the emphatic revelation which truly speaks to all hearts. 'As for the gods of the heathen, they are but idols; it is the Lord that made the heavens.' 'Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.' Here are the primal thoughts of religion which link man to the Almighty—the fear of God and the love of God. That revelation sounds the very first note in the religion of a disciple. The Majesty of God involves, in the man who will be His servant, the simplicity that is towards Christ. So it is that the first Apologists always speak: to know God, to see Him, does demand a simplicity of intent, a singleness of eye. As Theophilus of Antioch wrote:—'Show me your true self, and I will show you my God . . . for God is seen by those who are enabled

to see Him when they have the eyes of their soul opened.'

Thus, then, Christianity came into the world with an appeal of simplicity, an appeal which could be answered only by the single heart.

What a contrast it was to the world the old poets sing of! What a change from the gaieties, the luxuries, the bewildering philosophies, the contending theories of life, the impossible polytheisms. There, in the dawning of a new world, stood the pale figure of Christ upon the shore, with voice of love and hands that were pierced, calling the children to Him, those that had eyes to see and ears to hear. That is the contrast.

The voice of the Church said in those old days quite clearly: There is, behind the warring philosophies, the single reality of God, and with it 'the spirit of a wonderful hope'; only—that is essential—you must put away with a great will-effort, and in the spirit of a life-long consecration, the sins that so easily beset you; you must come with a conscious abandonment of guile, moral and intellectual, a surrender to the spirit of simplicity that is towards Christ. So Christianity appealed to the single-hearted. So in every age the appeal is repeated by the voice of the Church.

That, in such different ways, was the appeal of the hermits, of St. Francis of Assisi, of all pure moralists and clear thinkers. 'Let us try to think well,' says Pascal; 'this is the beginning of morals.' The life of man in all ages is a struggle against the complications, the obstructions, that arise, and that surround and clog the free expression of the soul which naturally stretches forth its hands towards God. Original sin, the undeniable tendency of mankind towards evil, the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches—they are the artificialities, the deceits which blind the eyes and harden the hearts which God has created for Himself.

It is in that sense that we may truly say that a return to Nature is a return to God, and that we may welcome every assertion of a desire for simplification, or recognition of the power of primal thoughts and primal emotions.

What is the basis of the religion of a disciple? It is that which men in every age have sought, and never more than they are seeking it now—a direct approach to the prime realities of human nature, the simplicity that is towards Christ. Strip away those things in your life that God did not put there, or does not sanction there; break down the barriers that prevent your seeing yourself as you are, and Him as He is. How easy it is to *say* those words, how familiar they are! and yet they cannot be said once too often. It is the artificiality of men's lives, the insincerities even of their sins, the trappings and fripperies of their philosophies—ay, and of their religions—which prevent their seeing God.

We have the great opportunity given us. We can make up every lesson of the hour and apply it to the great work of life, the realization of Christ in the heart, the bringing His perfect life to bear on the sins and miseries of our time. The rich, how much they need this lesson of simplicity to be brought home to them! The poor, God help them, how they look to us, who try to follow Christ, for example in faith and life!

We cannot avoid an answer, and the first word of our answer, please God, shall be this. A disciple of Christ is first of all one who says to God, with George Herbert at his *Mattens*—

> Indeed, man's whole estate
> Amounts (and richly) to serve Thee—

and who in all his life sets before him the clear ideal of singleness of heart—

> His words and works and fashion too,
> All of a piece, and all are clear and straight.

The outer life must be a picture of the inner. To declare this is not to say that men and women must not live as the duty of their lives calls them, for that, too, comes from God. It is not the profession, the trade, the position in the world, that makes or mars the disciple. There are no finer pictures of pure goodness, of Christlike simplicity and self-denial, than those which have come down to us from among the courtiers of the most cor-

rupt society that England ever saw—the court of Charles II. It is not the comfort, perhaps it is hardly even the luxury, of to-day that stands in the way of Christ. The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, are more than nineteen centuries old; and not the best critic of them is he who says that they are in every aspect common and unclean. No, it is the *use* which is our trial. It is the imperative direction, 'Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,' which, if we press it quite home, will bring us to 'the simplicity . . . that is toward Christ.'[1]

The Strength of Christ's Might.

Eph. vi. 10.—'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power (RV 'the strength') of his might.'

Whether we can or cannot demonstrate metaphysically the antecedent possibility of miracles, whether we can or cannot prove historically the fact of the Resurrection, whether it be true or not that Christianity contains no new moral precept, this one fact remains—incontrovertible, and on any other hypothesis inexplicable—that Christianity has been and is a moral power, that it has changed and is changing the moral tone of the human race, and that, in spite of the apathy and inconsistency of many of those who bear the Christian name, it gives a new motive to the doing of our duty, and supplies the lacking energy to our weak and struggling souls.

Strength is the common want of every one of us; we want not the knowledge of our duty but the power to do it. We all know more or less the bitter struggle between impulse and conviction; we have all been tempted—we are tempted every day—to give up what we know to be right for what we feel to be pleasant; we struggle, some of us, to resist, and we find our struggles in vain; we set out in the morning with the full intention of doing what is right, and we find before the day is half over that we have preferred the interest of the moment to known and undoubted duty. We would fain fear God and keep His commandments, but we find it so hard as to be virtually impossible to disentangle ourselves from the intricate ties which bind us to common modes of action, or to resist the accumulating influences which lead us to accept current maxims of morality. But the remedy lies within our reach. The Apostle, writing as one who had felt all this as strongly as we can feel it, bids us 'be strong in the Lord.' It would have been a mockery to have said simply, 'Be strong.' It is the expression of the deepest thought and the most varied experience to say, 'Be strong in the Lord.' The strength by which we are to live must be not ours but Christ's: it will come to us not from the human nature which we inherit at our birth, but from the Divine nature which His Spirit breathes upon us.

1. What is this strength? It is the power to do right when we know it; to give up what will be of most immediate advantage for the sake of the inner voice which speaks to us of duty. It is the power to avoid tampering with evil suggestions; to be able to resist the ever-recurring tendency of the old Adam to angry, selfish, cowardly, indolent, uncharitable actions. It is the power to do all this in the faith and by the promised power of Him who lived and died and is present with us still—the highest type of human excellence and the highest source of moral power.

2. It is not merely strength on the grand scale, strength for some great act of moral heroism. That which we want, and that which our Master gives us, is strength for our common life—strength to do our ordinary duties—strength not only for the pitched battles which some of us have, now and again, to fight, but strength also, and most especially, for the daily conflicts with evil, the skirmishes, so to speak, between the advanced outposts of evil and good, where they meet so closely as to seem not so much enemies as friends.

The strength is that of a new motive, and it is given to us by One who is not only a perfect Example, but an ever-present Guide.

[1] W. H. Hutton, *A Disciple's Religion*, 3ff.

For He who in those far-off ages trod the Judæan hills is with us still. He is with us not only as a memory of the past, but as a living influence. He who helped men in their common life long ago helps us still. The mere memory of Him would have done much for us. The bare record of His life, the story of His unflinching devotion to duty, of His boundless charity, of His unsullied purity, would of itself have suggested high and new motives. The fact that the ideal of humanity had once been realized would of itself have been an encouragement and a support to us in our efforts to do better. But the strength which we may have is something far higher. It is the strength of One who is ever present by His Spirit—who being very God is not far from every one of us, who being very Man can penetrate the deep recesses of our hearts and know at once their aspirations and their needs. It is the strength not of an imaginary picture of perfection, but of a Divine Redeemer. It is a strength, which, if once we make it our own, will grow with our growth, be sufficient for every need of life, and be a rod which will turn into dry land for us the dark river of death.

¶ There is a piece of sculpture in the Chapter House at Bristol. The work is a rude carving of very early date; but no one who has seen it can, I think, ever forget its lesson. The Lord is represented rising from the grave victorious over sin and death. His foot crushes down man's enemy. In His right hand He holds a cross, to which an embodied soul is clinging that so redeemed it also may be borne above. The soul clings to the Cross, and round its hands, weak and trembling as we may well suppose, the left hand of the Saviour is clasped to steady and sustain them. No image could be more true or more eloquent. It is the gospel in a figure. Man grasps the offered gift of life: One mightier supports him in his efforts. The hands of God encircle and upbear our hands as we hold the Cross.[1]

[1] B. F. Westcott, in *The Cambridge Review*, 1880, No. 28.

¶ Be strong in the Lord'—it must have seemed the wildest of paradoxes! To the eye of that Roman world the Lord of the Christians was anything but strong. A man of lowly mien, a man of gentleness, a man that did not strive or cry, a man that gave his cheek to the smiters and when he was reviled reviled not again—it was the last image which we should expect to convey to Paul's contemporaries the idea of strength. It must have sounded to them like speaking of a square circle. We could understand the Apostle saying, 'Be ye meek in the Lord,' 'Be patient in the Lord,' 'Be peaceable in the Lord'; but to point men to Jesus as a specimen of Roman strength—that was strange. Yet the instinct which prompted it was profoundly true. I have no hesitation in saying that the quality of Christ's strength was Roman, for its essential feature was tenacity of will. But the strange thing is that it came to Him by an opposite process from that by which it reached the Roman. It reached the Roman by a suppression of gentle feelings; it reached the Son of Man by a waking of gentle feelings. The tenacity of Christ's will came from the very fact that His heart was melting with love. The robust and the sentimental are usually considered opposites; but it is a mistake. Nothing produces a will of iron like a heart of wax; it is gentleness that makes you great.[1]

God-Given Power.

Eph. vi. 10.—'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.'

1. Power is immanent. It is anywhere. It is everywhere. It is eternal. It has been here from the beginning. It will be here to the end. It is visible. We can see it in constant action, yet what we see is only a few of its evidences. It is invisible. Its greatness is unsearchable. It is without us in earth and sea and sky. It is within us in mind and heart. All we are is an expression of it. We

[1] G. Matheson, *Messages of Hope*, 19.

can take as much of it as we can use. The more we use of it, the more we have of it. It is physical, clothed in dust and laved in water. It is spiritual: it mocks at obstacles; it levels barriers. It is in all space. It is in the souls of men. Whoever is wise enough may understand it. Whoever is adventurous enough may utilise it. Newton, Watts, Fulton, Edison—a host of men are its masters. And so are Buddha, Mahomet, Confucius, Christ. Power is not so much an impartation as it is an acquisition.

(1) There is the power of visible things—the whirl of the storm, the rush of the rapids, the reach of the wind-swept plains, the lift of the mountains. We are awestruck in the presence of Niagara. What an Almighty Hand created it! And yet it is but a dripping from the finger of God. Our wonder grows intelligent, and on a night light flames upon the streets of a distant city where by day the great wheels turn by the force of these turbulent waters. Someone understood them, caught their power and employed it.

(2) There is invisible power. It has been from the beginning, but there are few who discover it. There is the law of gravitation which holds the worlds to their appointed courses, which urges them, impels them to orderliness. It is watchful of big things and little things. A falling rock and a falling star are akin. It binds all things together in a relationship of dependence. The sun draws water to itself and releases it again to bless the parched land. It reaches warm fingers into the earth and sets life free in the seeds, then, like a universal mesmerist, draws it upward until it issues in food for the sower and bread to the reaper. 'How manifold are Thy works, O God! For these are all from Thee! There is no power but of God. He calleth the stars by name. He appointeth their courses. He establisheth their laws. He ruleth all things with power and majesty. The winds obey His will. The waters roar and are troubled. He utters His voice; they are still. The earth melts at His word.' And these things are for His children's happiness. They that love Him shall have no fear. They shall harness the winds. They shall command the waves. They shall share His power.

2. There is another power behind and above these visible and invisible physical forces. It is the power of the Spirit—the Spirit which transcends all violence. It moves in the moral and intellectual realm. It touches the thoughts, sifts them, cleanses them, educates and elevates them. It gives the mind insight and understanding. It lays hold upon the affections and purifies their desires. It stimulates the will and sets it upon tasks that are redemptive. This immanent power that moves through all created things, directing the performance of that wise and holy purpose revealed in the life of Jesus Christ our Lord, is the power that we worship. It is the power in which we trust as we give ourselves to the great task of making justice, peace, and love prevail upon the earth. God is the power of the universe manifest in physical creation, but the essence of His being is redeeming love. He is a Spirit—holy, righteous, loving—delighting in justice and goodness, long-suffering and forgiving. There is nothing that can withstand His power; no sin past His finding out; no evil beyond His chastisement. No folly can hide from Him, no lie can deceive Him, no injustice can escape Him. He is the great Divine onwardness to better things that sweeps like a mighty current through the earth, gathering up its waters, cleansing its filth, powering its spiritual industry. He is the Master of life and death. Therefore are we dependent upon that power for all the issues of life and death. We cannot be certain of winning a victory over the world when we grapple with it alone. We are possessed by fears that make us uncertain. We are subject to temptations which render us incompetent. We need God to make sure that all our efforts after righteousness shall have some reward of righteousness. We look upon our wretched yesterdays and tremble for to-morrow. Who will free us from the fetters of our habits, our negations, our inertia, our mistakes? Who will enable us to rise from our defeats stronger for our experience? Who

will stay the tears that blind our eyes to happiness? Who will aid our weakness to reach power indeed? Who can enable us to endure hardship and discipline save Him? With Him all things are possible. Without Him we can do little, and that little has no certainty of permanence. We have a vision of the men we want to be. Who will help us to arrive? There is nothing in heaven and earth like the emergence of the human spirit into the likeness of Christ. Reclaiming a desert soil is nothing to the marvel of redeeming a wasted life. Love grappling with misery and sin, transforming sordid lives, chastising evil concupiscence, converting selfish energies to make sacrifices is a greater power than that of drawing a blade of corn from the earth or turning the wheels for its grist.

3. What is the effect of this consciousness that in God we have all power in heaven and in earth? The effect is to relieve us of the burden of fear and wrong. We are like men in marching readiness. One there is who made the world. He will guide. Our responsibility is to follow. We have confidence in His knowledge of the smallest details of the campaign. Provision will be made for us—food and drink and raiment. We will seek first His righteousness. He will take care to add what other things are necessary.

What do men do without Him? Some face the brutal and revolting facts of life with stoic disregard—the misery of the poor, the tragedy of the beaten, the ugliness of the wicked. A man can go through life shrugging his shoulders at its sordid indulgences, its pitiful failures, its wretched struggles after preferment, its brutal oppressions, its callous disregards of decency and justice and honour. But that does not remedy matters. It only dulls a man's own sensibilities; makes him coarser in spiritual fibre, until he can no longer divine the hidden realities of life which are hopes of redemption. Sooner or later he becomes unable to interpret events correctly. There is no illumination for his soul. And other souls whom he might have lighted remain in darkness.

Others go through life snatching at every indication of joy—bits of lace and tawdry jewels—litter for the attic—ashes on the hearth. No warmth, no colour for the slow and feeble years. How pathetically they seek for comfort in their sorrows and for courage in their testing times.

But they who put their trust in God are kept in peace. They rest back upon God for the ultimate issue, as they give themselves wholly to the fight with personal temptations and to the struggle with corporate sins and social abuses. They are not afraid of them who can kill the body. They brave principalities and powers because they are confident in the Lord. They attempt what is impossible to other men because they know they can do all things in Christ. They have found Him, and in Him they have found God. Henceforth they can face with equanimity the world and its confusion of right and wrong. They give themselves to good works, unattracted by the lure of brighter and impermanent rewards. They run the straight race with God's good grace. They die as they have lived, unafraid.

¶ I remember starting in the early morning of a summer's day in the Dauphiné to motor across the mountains to Nice. We turned sharply from the main street of the village down a narrow lane that seemed to lead to the bottom of a perpendicular mountain. The chauffeur pointed upward to the cloud-swept summit. 'We shall climb there,' he said. I was incredulous. He set himself to the wheel. The motor began to push. You could feel the pull of it as we climbed. Miles of the way wound back and forth along the face of the cliff until it looked like a penmanship exercise. Sometimes the coils were not more than yards apart. You could look down the side of the machine thousands of feet into the chasms and valleys. The village became a red spot in the sunlight. The rain fell in showers. But up we climbed. At times from faintness one turned his eyes upward away from the shelving rocks. A false movement, and we would be hurled into eternity. Sometimes we halted on little passing shelves built

out from the rock to give some other machine which had signalled from above a chance to pass. But the engine throbbed away and urged us past whole mountain fields of violets and daffodils, up, up beyond the timber line, where at times we huddled in our blankets against the driving blizzard that swept us keenly. On over the divide we went and down to that earthly paradise of Nice among her palms, sunning herself by the blue Mediterranean.

So God expects us to have faith and courage and confidence in His power. We desire to climb with Him. He lifts us out of our narrow, circumscribed lives and draws us up the mountain. His power never deserts us. And across the great divide of death He draws us unafraid through its mystery and majesty and leads us safely to that sunny city of Kingdom Come beside the crystal sea.[1]

Wrestling.

Eph. vi. 12.—'We wrestle not (RV 'our wrestling is not') against principalities, against powers.'

'We wrestle'—in these words is struck the keynote of all real religion. It is strong, stern work. Sentiment may have its place, and a true belief is important; but unless there be a stern grappling with evil, and a strong laying hold of the good, our religion does not deserve the name.

This is the very manhood of a man—his virtue—the power of wrestling. Not mere gifts of intellect, or of feeling, but those sinews and thews of soul which enter into deeds—these make and prove us men. So man wrestles with Nature, and subdues it to his use; he wrestles with truth, and has 'all knowledge'; and in like manner, if he would be a true man he will ever wrestle for the good. The 'first man' was to prove his manhood by conflict; and by failure in the conflict his manhood was forfeited. The 'second Man,' if He would redeem His brethren, must also be tested by the ordeal of struggle; and the desert and Gethsemane bore witness to the strenuous strife by which He won the right to emancipate His people. And He, in turn, says to His people, 'Wrestle to enter in by the narrow door' (Luke xiii. 24), thus seeking to prepare us for the time when we shall be able to say, with His Apostle, 'I have wrestled the good wrestling' (2 Tim. iv. 7). Our own daily experience, also, compels us, often sadly enough, to endorse this same description of our life: 'We wrestle.'

¶ Most commentators give the meaning as simply 'wrestling;' but we may well ask whether this exhausts the intended significance of the word. Seeing that the reference to armour occurs both in the previous verse, ver. 11, and again in vers. 14, 16, 17, is it not possible that the Apostle meant to describe the Christian, not as a mere wrestler, but as an armed wrestler, that is, a gladiator? The whole context makes this not only possible, but probable. A wrestler had no need of such armour as is here described: he did not require to guard himself against darts, ver. 16; but here he is warned that a shield is needed with which to quench the fiery darts of the evil one. But a gladiator had to wrestle, and he was armed for the struggle. 'Wrestling' may be a mere friendly trial of skill, but this is not what St. Paul speaks of. He evidently refers to the gladiatorial shows, where the brutal sports were engaged in, in which the Romans so much delighted. He sets before his readers that the conflict against sin is no mere pastime, but a hand-to-hand struggle involving death: the Christian must either conquer or die. If we do not conquer sin, sin will kill us.[1]

Who, then, are the antagonists?

1. St. Paul looked forward to a great struggle between the Church and the Empire. It might be postponed; it might be deprecated, but it lay in the nature of things, and it must come at last. And to St. Paul's eye a struggle with the great Empire—with its vast forces, its vast prestige—cannot have seemed less than formidable. His practical genius cannot

[1] Chester B. Emerson.

[1] *The Expository Times*, ii. 182.

have underrated the real meaning of the undertaking 'to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.' He knew that he had to encounter prejudice and passion, exasperated to the point of violence, and armed with resistless force. He knew that he himself would have to stand before the tribunal of the Master of Thirty Legions; and he could not but have anticipated even then the final result.

2. Yet it was not these he mainly feared. We wrestle not, he said, against flesh and blood. Our visible and audible opponents, in the streets, in the synagogues, in the law courts, in the amphitheatres, are indeed human; if these were our only opponents, we should win easily. We wrestle, in truth, against principalities and powers—against beings and forces of another order, another order of intelligence, another order of existence.

Behind all that met the eye in daily life, St. Paul discovers another world, which did not meet the eye, but which was, for him, at least, equally real. Behind the tranquillity, the order, the enjoyment of life, the widening intercourse, the maintenance of law with a certain amount of municipal and personal liberty, which distinguished the imperial régime, as a whole; behind the tribunals of magistrates and the chairs of the philosophers; behind the stately official ceremonies, and the rude popular festivities; behind the fleets which swept the Mediterranean, and the legions which guarded the frontier on the Danube and the Euphrates; behind all that spoke and acted in this vast and imposing system, all its seeming stability and all its seeming progress, St. Paul discerned other forms hovering, guiding, marshalling, arranging, inspiring that which met the eye. Do not let us deceive ourselves, he cried; as if we had only to encounter so many social and political forces—so many human minds and wills, so many human errors, human prejudices, human traditions, human passions. Our real enemies are not human; they are in ambush behind; they are supersensuous. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

3. Have we no experience of these rulers of the darkness? Have we never known what it is to be carried away by a sudden impulse, to be driven hither and thither, in conscious humiliation and shame, before some strong gust of passion? Have we never seen 'another law in our members warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members'? What is this but to feel ourselves in the strong embrace and grip of another, who for the moment has overmastered us and holds us down? We may be unable to discern his form; we may be unable to define the precise limit or nature of his power; we may despair of deciding what it is that we supply out of our own funds of perverted passion, and what it is that he adds from the hot breath of a stronger and intenser furnace. But then the most ordinary processes of our vital functions defy analysis no less, however we may be certain of their reality. No, depend upon it, it is not any disposition inseparable from the conditions of human thought to personify and externalize passion that has peopled the Christian imagination with demons. As well might we say that the last infectious epidemic was a creation of human fancy; that it had not real existence; that it was the real cause of no disease in individuals. Human imagination may do much, but there are limits to its activity; and the hard facts of Revelation are beyond it, as truly as are the facts of Nature.

What was the Apostle's real attitude toward the Hebrew beliefs which lie behind his words? St. Paul was a very sensible man, and had no love for 'old wives' fables' (1 Tim. iv. 7). It is very difficult to believe that he took quite seriously all the current Jewish lore about angels and demons. Perhaps his attitude somewhat resembled our own to-day towards the mythology of *Paradise Lost*. We

know that the presentation is imaginative; we do not nicely distinguish between one member and another of the Satanic court. But we do not believe *Paradise Lost* to be nothing but a product of imagination; great truths of experience lie behind it. We are really up against great and complex forces of a very sinister character, and they have certainly deprived us of a paradise which ought to be ours. St. Paul's grandiose language about principalities and powers, whatever may lie behind it, has exactly the right emotional value. It makes us feel that we are up against something big, and sufficiently personal to arouse healthily our spirit of combat; it shows us that we cannot presume, and must cast ourselves upon God. But its large indefiniteness is helpful also. So it should be with our own teaching. In the past, the conception of Satan and of all unseen forces of evil has been vulgarized and made ridiculous, and we must not be surprised if very good Christians sometimes decline to believe in the devil. But we should point out that moral evil, mysterious as is its origin, is certainly very terribly real, and that moral evil means, and must mean everywhere, evil will; it cannot exist except where there is personality and power of choice. Facts certainly suggest that it is not confined to man, and that we are in fact tempted by an evil will or wills not identical with our own. Of what nature precisely this evil personal action may be we do not know; to call it personal is not to say that the personality involved resembles our own. Probably we cannot go much further. We can trace the rise and transformation of the conception of Satan among the Hebrews if we like; Satan was at first comparatively respectable. But the real questions are, Why did it arise, and why was the earlier conception found to be inadequate? If we think out these questions, we see that the conceptions reached rested upon the facts of experience, though the imaginative presentation went far beyond them. The facts really do suggest that we are up against something quite intangible, but very malign.

However much or little St. Paul retained of the Jewish doctrine of the spiritual world, one thing is clear, and it is all-important: he made it all serve a moral purpose. And that is a lesson for us. For how shall the field be swept clear of all the paraphernalia of the false supernatural which brings its double harm, degrading the souls that believe in it, and hardening into blank materialism the souls whom its absurdities or enormities drive into disbelief? We may prove one impostor after another to be false. We may demonstrate beyond all question that this or that phenomenon has nothing supernatural about it, but we shall work in vain until we strike right at the root of all the folly by taking Paul's ground, and insisting that whatever unseen presences there may be about us, we and they and all the universe must be subject to the eternal, universal sway of moral law; that therefore the only way to really disarm the evil, from whatever region of the universe it makes attacks upon us, is to live nobly, truly, purely. When men have been led to think thus of the world of spirits, we shall see a great restoral of healthy belief in spiritual presences. The fantastic and fitful, unreal and immoral, way of thinking and feeling about them will disappear; and calmly, quietly, without fright, without fanaticism, with a great deepening of the sense of the moral criticalness of living, men will know that the universe is larger than this earth, and that for a human creature to be good or bad means something out in the unknown, unknowable regions of spiritual life.

The Enemy Within and Without.

Eph. vi. 12.—'Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.'

THERE are forces of evil, both outward and inward, against which we have to contend; and therefore we must exert our will to 'take up the panoply of God,' that we 'may be able to withstand in the evil day.' Not yet can we

enjoy the rest and peace of the perfected saint, when no evil dares to approach the purified soul; and if we would win the victor's crown, we must, of our own will, stand up in the power of the Lord, and wrestle. This spiritual wrestling calls for more strength and vigilance than that of a competitor in the arena: for it is not 'against flesh and blood' that we contend, but, as Paul says, 'against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.'

The principalities and powers here referred to are not earthly authorities, but certain orders of wicked spirits, who were supposed to mingle unseen in the affairs of men, to produce physical and moral evils, and especially to hold sway throughout the domain of heathenism. This was by no means an irrational or improbable supposition in ancient times, when science was still in its infancy; for our little world was believed to be the great central body round which the sun and stars pursued their daily course, and the whole spiritual interest of the universe was brought to a focus here, and the soul of man, with the homage which it could render, was the prize for which the powers of good and evil contended. But for those who not only accept as a scientific fact, but have really apprehended, the insignificance of our planet even in the solar system, the insignificance of the solar system itself amid the illimitable hosts of stars, this mode of conception has passed away, as out of keeping with the infinite majesty of the Creator and the sublime order of that universe in which we play our little part. But the moral idea which the Apostle's words express in the forms of ancient thought remains as true as ever. The principalities and powers are the forces of moral evil, however we may conceive them, in ourselves and in the world around us; and the obligation of resisting them is enhanced a thousandfold when we rise to the conception, first of physical law which we know, and then to that of moral law which we believe, to extend throughout a universe of inconceivable vastness. Duty is not a provincial ruler of our petty world, but sits enthroned within the Will of God, and, for the sensitive conscience, looks down upon us from the mighty orbs that spangle the midnight sky. Conformity to that supreme Will is the end of our being; but it is a conformity which has to be won, not by lazy acquiescence in the temporary drift of things around us, but by exertion and conflict, by striving always to subordinate the temporal to the eternal, and by resisting those lower powers which tempt us from the upward way.

1. *The Inward Conflict.*—The contrast between our actual condition and the ideal end which conscience reveals is obvious at an early stage of spiritual experience. Not only the Christian theologian, but the Jewish philosopher and the Stoic moralist, were familiar with the internal war which was waged by duty against desire, and in which the will to do right often retreated from the field baffled and stricken with shame. We cannot pretend to understand all the purposes of God in establishing this contrariety in our nature; and often we must confess ourselves perplexed by the furious excesses of avarice, revenge, cruelty, and lust, which reduce men below the level of wild beasts, and are hard to reconcile with the goodness of Him who planted in our breasts the impulses of which these are a diabolical expression. But, accepting our nature as it is, and acquiescing in the general law that in every department of life we must start from the most elementary beginnings, we may perceive certain important ends which are fulfilled by the inward strife.

(1) Without the effort which is called forth by opposition we could never attain more than a negative goodness. We might be innocent, as a sheep is innocent; but without a sense of contrast within we should not even be conscious of our innocence, and our goodness would possess no moral quality. Virtue emerges only when we resist temptation, and choose the right by a deliberate act of will. The peace of the saint may come at last in a beauty of character that knows no doubt or

fear; but this is not like the innocence of Eden; the true saint bears on his bosom the scars of battle, and his calm brow is marked by a victor's power. But this comes not till we have passed through the desert of temptation, and the soul's earnestness and force have been called out in a death-grapple with the rulers of darkness.

¶ I will give you a page of what the greatest and best of all the Germans [Jacob Behmen] wrote three centuries ago concerning his own personal experience of the inward war. . . . In the second chapter of his Day-spring that great man and great saint of God says: 'Moreover, O my reader, I am a sinful man like yourself only I am a more sinful man than you can by any possibility be. For every day and every night and every hour when you are asleep I have to hold an unceasing grapple and struggle and agony against the devil. Sometimes, indeed, I will get the better of him; but, again, and suddenly, he will have me by the throat. But never for long, if only I have put on the whole armour of God. And so my whole life is spent, ever since the day when I first sighted the great enemy of my soul, and put on against him the whole armour of God. Do you understand me? Have you anything of my continual and never-ceasing experience?—my continual and never-ceasing experience of the devilish conditions, the devilish inclinations, the devilish dispositions, and the devilish passion and emotions that sometimes fill my whole soul and make my whole life one unrelieved agony. This life on earth, as I now experience it, may well be called by me the valley of the shadow of death, full as it is to me of such never-to-be-told anguish. And all this, my reader, is no story-book of mine; this is no composed-up fiction of mine; this is my own actual battle of all battles in which I am often suddenly struck down to very death and hell. As this life so divinely appointed us goes on, every truly wise man comes to know who and what the devil really is, and what a deadly enemy he is when he gets a footing, and what great power Almighty God permits him for a season and what deep wiles he has against all the true soldiers of Jesus Christ.' [1]

(2) Yet we cannot look upon this inward war as our final condition. The long struggle of duty is necessary to give firmness and decision to the character; and yet, while duty can never relinquish her Divine authority and must stand ready armed against every foe, she learns at last her own inability to end the strife, and gladly sees her behests fulfilled by a more spiritual power. We have not reached the peace of harmonized desires, and the reconciliation of the heart with the requirements of duty, till we rise into communion with God, and our life is flooded with His life, and our will is lost in His as the supreme and only good. So long as we live for self, however we may control its wayward impulses by the sense of duty, its lower claims will not cease to trouble us. But faith changes the scene of action, and places us on a vantage ground, where the clamorous appeals of earth are silenced, and our whole nature yields itself in simple trust to the moulding influence of Divine love. And thus at last we have peace, peace with God, peace with ourselves, a peace which we do not win by seeking it for ourselves, but which is given in answer to our self-despair and our cry for God. Faith, which works by love, takes us away from self, and fixes the heart, in the pure simplicity of adoration, upon eternal goodness.

But this life, too, follows the law of growth, and we must wait in patience for its fulfilment. It comes as a new principle, and announces itself as the true life of immortal souls; but it comes to a battered and tottering receptacle, which it cannot in an instant change into a glorious temple of God. We have the earnest of the Spirit; but we know not yet what we shall be, and we wait for our adoption as sons of God. But while we wait, we know that His will is good, and, according to our faith, His peace abides in our hearts.

2. *The Outward Conflict.*—We must now turn from the inward to the outward world. We cannot adore the sovereign Will without

[1] A. Whyte, *Not Against Flesh and Blood*, 17.

longing to see it everywhere triumphant; and we cannot be touched with the spirit of universal Love without desiring to redeem the world from the evils which beset it. The prayer 'thy kingdom come' expresses this pervasive desire of Christianity, the desire which has prompted all missionary zeal and been the inspiration of all philanthropic effort. In the world without, no less than in ourselves, we must wrestle with principalities and powers, and help to establish the reign of justice, mercy, and holiness among men.

(1) In regard to the direction and limit of our efforts it is impossible to lay down any rule; 'there are diversities of operations, but the same God,' and each man must obey the Divine call that comes to himself alone. Except in some great crisis of human affairs, comparatively few are summoned to sacrifice their lives or make any great public renunciation for the Kingdom of God's sake; but all are called to some secret acts of renunciation; and many a good man bears about with him a lifelong offering which is hidden almost from himself in the silence of his heart. We may, however, lay down a few rules which seem of universal obligation:—never, through cowardice, seem to sanction that against which your conscience revolts; in all your transactions maintain a high and honourable tone, and think more of the public welfare than of your private advantage; embrace such opportunities as present themselves, consistently with other duties, of helping by direct gift or effort the cause of righteousness and truth. It is by sacrifice, the wrestling of the wise and good, that the world is being slowly redeemed; and in this great sacrifice of humanity we may all bear our humble part.

(2) In thus wrestling with the powers of darkness in the world around us we might be tempted to despair, were we not assured that no faithful act or word is ever wholly in vain. The very victory of evil turns to its shame, and pricks the conscience of mankind. The Pharisee chuckles over the crucifixion of his defeated foe; and lo! the Cross is turned into a throne of glory on which is seated the Judge of the world. The howling mob shouts with satisfied hate as the lion tears or the flames consume the Christian martyr; but 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.' Somewhere within the breast of every man is the consciousness of duty, the sense of a fairer and diviner life; and this, in many a waiting and troubled soul, is roused into activity by the testimony of those who are faithful unto death. On our less tragic stage the same law prevails. Great and unpopular causes demand great souls, ready to sacrifice, if need be, friendship, position, reputation, ease, rather than be false to the call of God which has sounded within them. In the simplicity of faith, which counts not worldly things dear to itself, we must take our place on the side of righteousness, doing what in us lies to promote the public weal; and, through humble surrender to God of the hidden springs of our life, we must bear witness to the reality of Divine things. Only let us believe that the voice which speaks to ourselves is not far from others, and if we rightly interpret it by word or deed we shall waken somewhere its sleeping echoes.

In entering the world's arena to join in the great struggle of good against evil we are entering a glorious and world-wide fellowship. Those who will be pronounced worthy in the grand assize are of every kindred tongue, and nation; and, however lowly may be our lot, however modest and obscure our testimony, we clasp brotherly hands with them whenever we help the least among mankind to choose the better way. We cannot give a cup of cold water to a child in the spirit of Christ, and fail of our reward. And our reward is fellowship with Christ; nay, in the words of the Apostle, we are 'labourers together with God,' and are accepted by Him as lowly instruments in working out His infinite designs. Oh! the humbling and exalting power of such a faith. That we may not be altogether unworthy of it, we must take up the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.[1]

[1] J. Drummond, *Pauline Meditations*, 241ff.

The Stages of the Struggle.

Eph. vi. 12.—'Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities.'

THERE are two stages in a man's life which we should do well always to bear in mind, because they are both needful to us if we are to become what God meant us to be.

1. The first stage of a man's life comes when he awakes to the fact that if he is to live at all he must struggle. If he is to learn it means labour—serious, persistent labour; if he is to make the most of his strength he must train it, of his health he must preserve and not waste it; if he is to hold his own among men he must know what men think and have thought; he must be determined, and fearless, must be true to the inmost convictions of his heart. The man awakes; he learns—what a shock it is to most of us!—that time does not stand still, that if he does not bestir himself, the tide will have swept by and left him, and he will be no use to his fellows or to himself. He stands up, ready for the struggle, and in a moment he is in the thick of it. Its absorbing interest seizes him, and he could no more tear himself away than could an infant caught in the complications of some great machine. He has ceased to be a child; he has escaped the devil's snare of slackness and idleness. He has begun to live, and every day he lives the struggle is keen and continuous. But not for worlds would he go back. He knows the joy of combat against obstacles. He knows what true living is.

2. The second stage comes when a man awakes to the fact that he does not live by bread alone, that it is not the circumstances of his life, not where he lives or what his work is, that matter a jot to his true self, to the spirit, to the soul. All life long his fight may be against ignorance; or it may be against poverty; or it may be against bad health which seems to cramp and limit every effort; or it may be with the conditions of his life, the peculiar troubles of a particular occupation, the peculiar distractions and interruptions and vexations of such or such a work. But it is not the outer circumstances that matter; it is the spiritual conditions we have to deal with, and fight our way through, and conquer. Not the things the tempter uses for his tools, but the tempter; 'not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness.'

The first stage of man's awakening may have led to a successful struggle. He may have got on, have secured a good position or a good business, or made himself a happy home. He may feel that he has started life well. He may even have become learned, or rich, or popular, or influential, or famous. He may have gained the world—but there is still the struggle in his soul, for the tempting voice says, 'Fall down and worship me.' Here is the fight to which St. Paul prays God his friends may awake: here is the battle for which they need indeed the whole armour of God. Truth and righteousness, peace of mind and faith, the helmet of God's salvation and the sword of His eternal Word of promise and protection—those are what are needed; for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' He who tries to answer to God's grace, who tries to become what Christ set before him to be, has reached—be it early or late—this second stage of man's life.

¶ The more that the battle *with* the unseen *for* the unseen takes possession of a man, the more the battle *with* the seen *for* the seen must let him go. You may put it to yourself either as a necessity or as a privilege, either 'you may' or 'you must.' But at any rate the two are inconsistent with one another, the eagerness for the spiritual and for the temporal victory. They cannot live together.

When the passion of our life is to conquer sin and be good, we shall let men beat us in the race of business, we shall let men overwhelm our wishes with their arrogance, or drown our good repute in their slanders, wherever the great fight of our life, the fight with sin, would suffer a moment's hindrance

by our effort to refute the slander or to right the wrong. This is a noble liberty. The true struggler with sin will no more turn out of his way to punish a man who has wronged him than the captain who is leading his army into deadly fight will stop to chase a fly that stings him on the way. The battle with 'principalities and powers' puts us above the fight with 'flesh and blood.' [1]

The Modern Powers.

Eph. vi. 12.—'We wrestle . . . against powers.'

St. Paul often uses wrestling as a figure to represent the strenuousness of the Christian life. The wrestling is not always the same. Though our wrestling never ends, yet as life advances it changes its character. The antagonist is less physical, more spiritual, till the Apostle can say, 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers.' And not only so, but the wrestling changes with the progress of the ages. Our wrestling is not identical with that of the first followers of Christ. In other words the 'powers' that are formidable to us are different from those that assailed them. Theirs were spiritual beings, ours are intellectual conceptions and natural forces.

1. Our 'powers' belong to *Space*. For it is a curious thing that the more conscious man has become of space, the more that consciousness has weighed against the Christian belief. Once upon a time people had small sense of space: they did not know the universe they lived in: they did not know of their own relation to that universe, or they dreamed a relation very different from the truth. The earth was flat. Over it there was 'that inverted bowl we call the sky.' Sun, moon and stars were lit for the sake of it. Man was the centre of all things and his world the obvious focus of creative care. Conceiving of his world—his physical world—in this fashion, he shaped the spiritual universe accordingly: it was comparatively easy to believe in Incarnation, Revelation, Redemption and all manner of mighty deeds done for a world so central in the scheme of God. By and by there came a change. Men learned to know the real universe. The science of astronomy pushed out the irrationalities of astrology. Men discovered that the world was not stationary but moving—a moving part of a moving system; that it was not central, but a subordinate member of a subordinate constellation; that instead of being the focus of creative care, it at all events shared that care with other worlds too many to be numbered. And though this was a mighty addition to truth, it became and still is an equally mighty difficulty for faith.

It has often been frankly said that astronomy destroyed Christianity. 'When people began to realize the fact,' Sir Leslie Stephen says, 'that we live in a wretched little atom of a planet dancing about the sun, instead of being the whole universe, with a few stars to save candle-light, the ancient orthodoxy was shaken to its base.' Even when this has not been so frankly expressed, it has been dumbly and dimly felt; the chill of the spaces that lie between the constellations throws a frost upon our souls. 'Help us, O God,' the Breton sailor prays, 'the sea is so great, and our boats are so small.' But there are men and women alive to-day to whom that sense of space is an argument not for prayer but for dumbness. I am one among so many millions. The world on which these millions crawl and fight and die is but a pebble in the ocean. Were it to be dissolved as many other worlds have been dissolved whose dust now floats through space, it would never be missed. That God should care for me, should think of me, should send His Son to redeem my world and me—where shall I find faith enough to believe that, or conviction enough to proclaim it? 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained':—once they turned that gaze into a song: it is now one of our temptations to turn the song into a sob, or at least a silence. Was it not Thomas Carlyle who

[1] Phillips Brooks, *The Law of Growth*, 75.

called the star-lit heavens 'a sair sicht'? Before the mere sense of space, faith and the joy of it seem sometimes to die. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against—*that*.'

But in face of all that has been discovered as to the greatness of the universe, faith must learn to assert herself and not bow the knee to space even for one moment. Space measurements are irrelevant here. Though our world be a small world, it may nevertheless be precious in God's sight. Though we be as insects in mere size, yet if we have souls, these souls after all may be worth redeeming. And what was at first sight incredible may seem to second thoughts most reasonable: 'God so loved the world'—this little world!—'that he gave his only-begotten Son.'

¶ The size of the universe is certainly no disproof of God's power, and therefore need be no disproof of His care. Indeed, its greatness provides some measure of His majesty and His mind. If this universe was created by Personal Mind, then that Mind is at least capable of this universe. The contemplation and study of the greatness of nature and the might of the universe is indeed a necessary corrective to some types of piety. The intimate familiarity with God to which religion invites us should never diminish reverence for His glory and awe at His greatness: and of this the scientific observation of nature, and especially of the heavens, suffices to remind us. But this vastness need not involve any diminution of God's care for its minutest part, and therefore for our tiny planet; for there is not only vastness visible in our universe, there is order, there is stability, there is provision.[1]

2. Our 'powers' may belong to *Time*. Let us suppose that our wrestling with the problem of space is successful, that we can gaze unblenched upon the exceeding vastness of the universe, deeming that for faith this matters nothing at all: let the trumpets blow for one victory at least. But now the struggle renews itself in another form. Grant the worth of the soul and the possibility of redemption in spite of the chilling vastness of space, why does not redemption come more quickly? If God deigns to turn His chariot towards this little corner of His universe, why tarry the wheels of it? If the world is loved and not ignored, why does not His Kingdom come?

This is an old difficulty for believing hearts: they were wrestling with it towards the close of the New Testament period—witness the Second Epistle of Peter. The Christ had come: He had left in the hearts of His own the hope that He would come again: all the wonder of His first coming had not been out of proportion either to the promises of God or to the needs of men; and no sign upon the sky, no wonder upon the earth, could be out of proportion to the same promises and needs. Yet the days and months rolled on into years, the years into decades, the decades into generations; and Time, instead of being the vindicator of the Master's words, seemed rather to mock alike His promises and His people's hopes. 'Where is the promise of his coming?' they began to ask, and to say, it might be in mockery, it might be in despair, 'All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' It is an old difficulty but it has a new face: it is one which, like the difficulty created by our knowledge of space, we of these later generations must feel more keenly than the Christians of the first days. Sometimes the problem grows to a passionate intensity in hours of chaos and overthrow, when Time seems to undo with his own hands any good he has achieved: the miserable futility of things cries to us like the maniac maid in Shelley's poem—

> My Father Time is weak and grey
> With waiting for a better day;
> See how idiot-like he stands
> Fumbling with his palsied hands.
> He has had child after child,
> And the dust of death is piled
> Over every one but me—
> Misery! oh Misery!

And even apart from such crises of ruin and

[1] W. E. Orchard, *Christianity and World-Problems*, 7.

distress, some of those who have faced and laid the spectres of the mind will tell you that they have confronted no spectre grimmer than old Father Time, laden with questions sharper than his scythe.

But it is not true, it never was true, that all things continue as they were: that is the exaggeration of fear, or the excuse of laziness and cowardice. In the earliest generations, all things did not continue as they were. Jerusalem fell, and the Master's threatenings were justified by that amazing Day of Judgment. The Spirit came upon the Church, and so He did not leave His disciples orphans: He came to them. All things certainly did not continue as they were. And if you look through history you will indeed find periods of stagnation, ebb-tides of faith, the breath of the night-wind, the retreat of the army that should be advancing, the slumber of those who should have loins girt and lamps lit. But you will also find both gradual growth and sudden upheaval. You will find growth, if you take a wide enough survey. 'The lesson of life,' Emerson says, 'is to believe what the years and the centuries say against the hours.' And you will find cataclysm, the great days of His appearing, when the things that are shaken pass in order that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Faith has history behind her when she thrusts Time aside that she may look beyond him to the eternal throne, refusing to be wearied by his slowness, or chilled by his cynicism, or strangled by his persistent clutch. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years: a thousand years are as one day. 'The tyranny of time,' Faber says, 'sits lightly on Divine works: they have other measures.' So, trying to judge by those other measures, we keep believing: let the trumpets blow for another victory.

3. Our 'powers' belong to *Sense*. We believe in what we see. We hold what we can grasp. We are sure of what we can touch. And, under the spell of that logic, men sink down upon the seen and temporal and dream no more of the unseen and eternal. It was said by someone long ago that it was easy to believe in immortality so long as one was reading Plato: mind and heart gave their assent together to an argument so lofty and to pleading so reasonable. But that was only as long as one was reading Plato: when the book was closed the reasoning seemed to lose its power, the impression faded, one seemed shut into this present world. Many men to-day are repeating that experience. They read a Book which bears a far sweeter and more powerful witness to the unseen than Plato ever could give: the music of it soothes their souls: its statements are grave with a solemn assurance: it is associated with moments of worship, when a man is at his best and God seems nearest. But as they close the Book or leave the Church there is a change: the world reasserts itself: things seen become so plain and powerful that things unseen are pale and poor by comparison. The power of sense lays hold of them, refusing to give them more than the eye can see and the hands touch. And if they try to peer past their antagonist and catch a glimpse of something higher and diviner, it sometimes seems as though even a great wrestling could scarcely accomplish their end. How many have been conquered here, their souls stifled within them, and they themselves left—

> With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,
> Tame in earth's paddock as her prize!

Here also Faith must live by insisting upon herself, by insisting upon her right to live, by wrestling still, patiently, bravely, prayerfully. By insisting upon herself, did I say? say rather, by insisting upon Christ, and by cleaving to Him with all her powers. We have seen how Space chills Faith: how Time wearies her: how Sense hampers, chokes and blinds her. We wrestle—we who try to believe and keep believing—not against flesh and blood, but against such all-pervading antagonisms as these. But the answer to Sense is Christ: He brings near to us the things that Sense could never have discovered. And the answer to the brow-beating of Time is Christ: Time may be slow or swift, but Christ came in the fullness of the time, and if the end is

to be worthy of such a beginning the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon. And as for the chilling consciousness of Space, Christ is a reality so transcendent that every form of physical measurement becomes small beside Him: He—

> Spurned the tame laws of Time and Space,
> And brake through all the heavens to our embrace,

because He is Love, and Love tolerates no barriers nor counts distance any obstacle to its passionate desire.[1]

The Armour of God.

Eph. vi. 13.—'Take unto you (RV 'take up') the whole armour of God.'

The military metaphor of which this verse is the beginning was obviously deeply imprinted on Paul's mind. It is found in a comparatively incomplete form in his earliest Epistle, First Thessalonians, in which the children of the day are exhorted to put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation. It reappears, in a slightly varied form, in the Epistle to the Romans, where those whose salvation is nearer than they believed are exhorted, because the day is at hand, to cast off, as it were, their night-gear, and to put on the 'armour of light'; and here, in this Epistle of the Captivity, it is most fully developed. The Roman legionary to whom Paul was chained here sits all unconsciously for his portrait, every detail of which is pressed by Paul into the service of his vivid imagination. The virtues and graces of the Christian character, which are 'the armour of light,' are suggested to the Apostle by the weapons which the soldier by his side wore. The vulgarest and most murderous implements assume a new character when looked upon with the eyes of a poet and a Christian. Our text constitutes the general introduction to the great picture which follows of 'the panoply of God.'

[1] J. M. E. Ross, *The Christian Standpoint*, 140ff.

What is the armour? 'The whole armour of God,' or what is called elsewhere 'the armour of light,' is the sanctification of our whole nature through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the only panoply invulnerable to evil.

Why does the Apostle call it the armour *of God?*

1. It can be supplied only by God; we cannot forge for ourselves this suit of mail. It was never produced by any terrestrial Vulcan. No skill of ethical philosopher or religious reformer can bring it within our reach.

Is it not a strong encouragement for us to read here of God's provision for His soldiers, detailed in language of swelling fullness, each detail a text by itself—the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of peace, the shield, the large, doorlike shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit? The Christian has his trials. He has a conscience more sensitive, a heart more tender, eyes which are keener to detect evil, than other men, and life is to him, in one sense, more of a strain. But the Christian has wonderful compensations. He knows, as others cannot, how rich a Provider and how good a Keeper God is. There is no fact in Christian experience to which it is easier to find hearty testimony than that. How often, when a minister is saying 'Good-bye' to some aged, toil-worn saint, does he get the response, said so quietly, yet so feelingly, 'Ah, God has been very good to me.'

2. It is the armour of God, because we can wear it only when we are in the full enjoyment of our proper relations with God. It is only as we are constantly in touch with Him that we can be equipped for the war.

Sometimes one of the Lord's knights loses one piece of armour, and he must at once repair to the armoury. Perhaps he has lost his helmet, or his shield, or even his breastplate, and the enemy has discovered his vulnerable place. We must never continue our journey imperfectly armed. The evil one

will ignore the pieces we have, and he will direct all his attack where there is no defence. Back to the armoury! Back to the armoury, that we may 'put on the whole armour of God.' The Lord is waiting; let us humbly and penitently ask for the missing piece.

3. It is the armour of God, because the possession of it is the direct result of the presence of God within. Where the Spirit of God inhabits our nature, His presence insures our possession of this armour of proof.

¶ The development of electricity has brought with it a new kind of peril that has set inventors on devising anti-electric armour; and recently a coat of mail was fabricated that is effectual against the dangers of high-tension electricity. The protection consists in a garment of fine close brass gauze, which envelops the body and extremities entirely, so that the current, if it should pass over the body, will only get as far as the metallic surface, and be then conducted off harmlessly. Thus the occult forces of evil, the temptations which appeal to the mind and heart, are neutralized by the delicate mail, the spiritual armour, which guarantees the salvation of faithful souls. We cannot read the whole passage whence our text is taken without feeling that the atmosphere of life is charged with malign electricities, which work deadly mischief unless we are sheltered from head to foot in the invisible anti-electric armour which Heaven silently and constantly forges about pure-hearted men.[1]

4. It is the armour of God because Jesus Christ, the God-man, was clothed in it, and in it defeated the foe. At any rate, we may learn what this armour is, and how best to use it, by studying the use that Christ made of it. We may learn how to use our arms properly by watching the motions and methods of a skilful and experienced soldier, and so, we may form some idea of how to use the armour of God by observing how it was employed by Him who is our great Exemplar in this as well as in every other respect.

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Ashes of Roses*, 95.

The Lord Jesus, all love and beauty, was the most hopeless target against which demon ever shot an arrow; and as the mind of Christ dwells in us and the spotlessness of His life is attained by us we also become the despair of hell. The grosser temptations fail to deprave one who is clothed in the shining mail of holiness.

¶ A writer tells of going with a party down into a coal mine. On the other side of the gangway grew a plant which was perfectly white. The visitors were astonished that there, where the coal dust was continually flying, this little plant should be so pure and white. A miner who was with them took a handful of black dust and threw it upon the plant, but not a particle of it stuck, it all fell off. Living there amid the black dust, nothing stained its snowy whiteness.[1]

The Evil Day.

Eph. vi. 13.—'That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.'

Every day has its evils. What are the special tendencies that we have to withstand in our day?

1. One of the dangerous tendencies is the tendency to unregulated freedom. Every one must see that the rapid advance of liberty in every relation and sphere of life is one of the most conspicuous features of the present day. Restraint is being reduced to the narrowest limits. In families there is much less of formal discipline than there used to be. In society there is a general relaxation of conventional rule. Churches do not exercise the same kind of authority as they once did; they are no longer absolute masters and their ministry one of direction, they are aiming more and more at being fraternal helpers and guides; 'not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.'

Now this rapid and universal spread of liberty has its dangerous as well as its promis-

[1] James Learmount, *The Year Round*, 116.

ing aspects. It is often forgotten that liberty is not an end, but a means to an end; not the highest good, only a necessary condition of achieving the highest good. It is simply opportunity. There are circumstances in which freedom from outward restraint can be regarded only with fear. When a youth, ignorant, foolish, and morally weak, with faculty undisciplined and little power of self-control, takes his life into his own hands, his freedom will be a curse to him. He will regard it simply as opportunity to do what he likes, what his wayward impulses and passions suggest. And transition from the security of home and early life to the independence of maturer years can be passed through without moral injury only when inward principle is ready to take the place of outward restraint. It is only when the power of self-command has been developed and tried that liberty is a blessing, and not a curse. Emancipation from external authority leads to new and worse bondage unless it is made the occasion of voluntary allegiance to the highest law of life. When we look back upon the olden days of submission to authority, which the modern world prides itself upon having outgrown, it is with a certain sense of loss. The spirit of reverence, whatever of superstition and servility it implies, made impossible the coarse self-assertion which in these days is so widely cherished as a merit, and which has its source in a great degree in the decline of domestic discipline.

2. A second dangerous tendency of modern life is connected with the increased and constantly increasing supply of that means of excitement, self-indulgence, and social dissipation which is a distinguishing feature of our generation. It is impossible for any observing and thoughtful man not to see that the temptations of our time to a life of sensuous gratification are peculiarly great, and that in modern society amusement is coming to be regarded more and more as one of the supreme ends for which men live. Serious men outside all the churches—men not by any means what we ordinarily mean by religious men—are yet deeply impressed by the dangerous length to which the craving for amusement is carrying our people. It is not necessary to land in the music-halls and gin-palaces to become the slave of pleasure and enslaving self-indulgence. A craving for sensuous excitement can kill the nobler impulses and quench the spirit in those who are lacking in no refinement of life, and who shrink from the touch of anything coarse and foul.

3. A third dangerous tendency of modern life is connected with the undue excitement of the desires which lead men to seek and strive after worldly possessions and distinctions. Our age is in most ways too materialistic. We see it not only in the foolish display which wealth makes and in the mad haste of the multitude to be rich, but in the disposition prevalent everywhere to judge everything by material standards. The school, the church, education, everything, books, newspapers, and common talk of men, are saturated with this materialism. Coal, acres of wheat, corn, railroads, accumulations of capital and such like, are constantly quoted as indicating the greatness of our country. We talk about a man being worth so much when we refer only to the money he possesses. We are constantly teaching by example that money is the one thing to get, and thus make it difficult for the young to believe that there are forces in the world that cannot be weighed in material balances. The supreme peril to society at the present time is in the depression of our life from moral to material values, in the coarse and unchastened worldly wisdom which makes men concentrate their energies upon material aggrandisement, and feel that so they grow in material value.

4. Another tendency of modern movement and life is to make less and less of the individual and more and more of society. The tendency is healthful and hopeful so long as it merely suggests sympathy, fellowship, co-operation, and does not depreciate and depress the element of personal integrity and strength, and weaken the sense of individual responsi-

bility. A man is surrounded with an inevitable network of relations and duties toward those among whom he lives; yet if he does not keep within himself the soul of individual energy and honesty society becomes rotten. A perfect society will never be constructed out of imperfect individuals, and social movements in which individuality is habitually sacrificed are doomed to fail. The separate dignity and responsibility of each man is the foundation of the Divine education of the human race, the foundation of the Christian redemption, the rock on which Christ built and builds His Church.

Social and philosophic tendencies, therefore, which obscure and deny individual freedom and responsibility require to be resisted. We must not allow the life in common—just now wider, more conscious of itself, and more dominant than it ever was—to hinder us from doing justice to individual character or to intrude into the province of that independent life which every one ought to live with himself and God. The truly royal man, the king unto God, is the man who realizes that he has a distinct personal responsibility for his own thoughts, speech, action, life, and who realizes that his thought must be his own thought, his speech his own speech, his action his own action, his life his own life. In every age the hope of society, as Emerson tells us, lies not in conformity but in individuality. All the progress of the world is due to men who have dared to be individual, dared to give free and full play to their convictions, aspirations, and ideals; dared to resist the social pressure around them, and to live apart, when there was a clear call to do so, from common and public sentiments and ways. It is from these little personal centres of independent thought and life that there come the moral ideas and forces which regenerate human society.

5. Another dangerous tendency of modern life is connected with the questioning spirit, and with the changes of view which are coming over great questions of life and religion in our day. On all sides we see the minds of men busy on the highest subjects with an activity which is almost without parallel. The condition of calm receptiveness of traditional opinions has long since passed away, and peace in believing fifth century or seventeenth century creeds is now left to the ignorant and unthinking. The results of physical investigation, the wider, deeper, more scientific study of ancient religions and the sacred literature of our own religion, the growth of a more humane and ethical spirit, are making men profoundly dissatisfied with old and familiar forms of thought and faith, changing their theories of creation, inspiration, revelation, incarnation, atonement, salvation, retribution. That is the cry of a fine spirit which our dead poet put into the lips of Harold—

> O God! I cannot help it, but at times
> They seem to me too narrow, all the faiths
> Of this grown world of ours, whose baby eye
> Saw them sufficient.

And it is a cry that finds its echo in many hearts in these days. Their questions, doubts, scepticisms are the sign and consequence not merely of larger knowledge, but of larger faith, and a higher ideal of God. And there is another large class not less honest, who are simply searchers after truth, not possessors of it; and the more distinctly they avow their inability to believe many things generally believed among us, the more honest they probably are; and there are hundreds and thousands everywhere who are living illustrations of Pope's famous line, that 'a little learning is a dangerous thing.' They know enough of what is in the air to make them doubt the religious ideas of their youth, but they have not thought deeply enough, or had experiences deep enough, to enable them to find a new sanctuary for the soul.

Now, one need not take a gloomy view of the present state of things. We are not where we are to-day without God. It is not so much the tendencies of thought of which we need to be afraid as the tendency not to think. A man who asks a question is in a more hopeful condition than the man who does not think

enough and care enough to ask a question. If thought lives it must change with the changing standards and outlooks of man in this infinite universe. New knowledge must always, for a time, be revolutionary; and a truer and higher faith is ever born through doubt of the less true and the less high. Let us not fear that true religion will suffer from the increase of knowledge. The sun still shines, the stars will keep their ancient path, spring and summer and harvest still come as they came when the world was young. Although the thoughts of man about material laws and relations have suffered vast change, the eternal realities of religion, the great sanctities of the world's wonder and worship and faith and love, do not vanish or diminish because we have grown into larger and better apprehensions of their meaning; rather do they become more wonderful and worshipful, more worthy of our confidence and love, filling the world and life and the deep soul with clearer light and serener peace.

But, on the other hand, it is a serious question where, amid this transition and strife, we individually are to take our stand. The structure of a fine life never can be built on an unstable foundation of thought and faith in regard to the moral and spiritual verities. There is no complete manhood, no full rounded culture, no noble usefulness possible without faith. While there are things which we can never settle in this world, which must always remain matters of speculation, there are also some very simple things about which we need to feel certain, and which need to be held, and can be held, with a firm grasp. True, doubt is not a thing to be denounced, but helped; but it by no means follows that when it is doubt of the great things—doubt of God and His eternal law and eternal goodness, doubt of the witness of Jesus Christ—it by no means follows that it is not an evil and a great evil, an evil which, though not due to moral character, yet affects moral character. What protection has a man against himself when he is living without God in the world? What can ordinary motives do for him when he is driven into the wilderness of his secret life to be tempted of the devil? It is just here in this most intense and personal centre of existence that all secular and agnostic theories of life utterly break down.[1]

¶ In Canon Henry Lewis' *Modern Rationalism* he has a chapter entitled 'Scepticism and the Making of Character.' Having traced the evil results which scepticism had morally on the characters of Goethe, Schopenhauer, Georges Sand, and Shelley, he asks: Is Scepticism in its normal results on character fairly represented by such lives as those of Goethe, Schopenhauer, Madame Sand, and Shelley? Are the lives lived by Agnostics and Rationalists such lives to-day? Nay. Is it not a challenge often made to Religion that the lives of Sceptics are sometimes more conspicuously good and kind and true than the normal lives lived by Christians?

An answer to all this is that the effects of a system of belief and practice are to be seen in the lives of the men and women who accept it and propagate it and rule their own conduct by it. That every Sceptic will show such ill results as we have seen in Goethe, Schopenhauer, Madame Sand, and Shelley would be an absurd thing to say, for it is not every Sceptic who lives only on the lines of his own anti-religious creed.

But we do say that Scepticism in every Sceptic, who abandons the ruling force of Religious standards, will have in him not only the possibilities, but also the strong tendencies, of all which we have seen coming from these four. It must be so—for when the fear of God, and all that the fear of God has produced in the form of moral conceptions and moral laws have been dismissed—and when no greater source than human reason is substituted to take their places, then what we have seen coming from such pre-eminently gifted Rationalists as Goethe, Schopenhauer, Madame Sand, and Shelley in character and conduct is sure to come from smaller and less endowed people.

If we were asked to state shortly some of the chief issues which the Scepticism that aggressively takes the place of Religion will

[1] J. Hunter.

bring to human life—we should class them thus:

(1) A lowering of the best ideals which have hitherto prevailed in man's relations to woman.

(2) A blurring of the distinctions which mankind have learned in the progress of ages to make between right and wrong—good and evil—truth and error.

(3) A cheapening of the value of human life.

The scale on which these issues at present come to human life from the sources of an anti-religious Scepticism is relatively small. But what would the scale be if Scepticism ever took the place of Religion, and became the conviction and the rule of the many That is the tremendous prospect which requires to be kept steadily in mind by all who care for the future of the human race—by the earnest scientific doubter as well as by the keen religious believer.[1]

¶ Does it matter *what* a man believes? It matters greatly in the shaping of his character if it be a living belief and not a mere tradition or convention. . . . But it matters not less, perhaps more, whether he retains the believing spirit at all, an uncorrupted sense of the goodness and wonder and moral meaning of human experience, an upper realm of light and faith in some form or other, with an eye for some celestial truth and a heart prepared to trust and rejoice according to that truth. Is there any calamity more deadly than the decay and death of the very capacity of the heart for believing high things?

Upon the white sea sand
There sat a pilgrim band
Telling the losses that their lives had known,
While evening waned away
From breezy cliff and bay,
And the strong tides went out with weary moan.
There were some who mourned their youth
With a most tender ruth,
For the brave hopes and memories ever green;
And one upon the West
Turned an eye that would not rest
For the fair hills whereon its joys had been.
Some talked of vanished gold,
Some of proud honours told,
Some spoke of friends who were their friends no more;
And one of a green grave
Far away beyond the wave,
While he sits here so lonely on the shore.
But when their tales were done,
There spoke among them one,
A stranger, seeming from all sorrow free:
'Sad losses ye have met,
But mine are sadder yet,
For the believing heart has gone from me.'
'Then, alas!' those pilgrims said,
'For the living and the dead,
For life's deep shadows and the heavy cross,
For the wrecks of land and sea;
But, howe'er it came to thee,
Thine, brother, is life's last and sorest loss.
For the believing heart has gone from thee—
Ah, the believing heart has gone from thee.'[1]

[1] H. Lewis, *Modern Rationalism*, 339.

Stand!

Eph. vi. 13.—'Having done all, to stand.'

What is this 'all' which the Apostle holds done? Two views may be taken. The expression may mean 'all' in the way of equipment, or it may mean 'all' in the way of conquest. We may understand Paul as saying either, 'having prepared all,' or 'having overcome all.' If we take the first sense we make Paul repeat himself. He has just been speaking of such successful resistance. So now we take the word 'stand' as referring to a standing when the battle is over. Then the thought is consecutive, and the lesson is plain. 'Take the whole armour of God,' says the Apostle, 'and then you will not only triumph in the evil day, but you will hold on and hold out when the evil day has gone by, with the particular foes it discloses, the particular perils it

[1] R. E. Welsh, *Man to Man*, 221.

implies. You will not only be triumphant in the midst of the conflict, you will be safe in the calm that succeeds it.

Do the words contain an anti-climax? Is there something tame and depressing in the ring of them, and would we rather have expected the text to run thus: 'That having done all, we may exult'; or 'that having done all, we may honourably rest,'—rest amidst the plaudits of our brethren, the approval of our conscience, and the favour of our God? But, 'having done all, to stand,'—simply stand, as if there were nothing in store for us more romantic or attractive than that,—are we surprised to find the truth put in this way, and disappointed at the close it leads up to? Perhaps so. But the more we watch life round about us, and the more, too, we trace the workings and the history of our own treacherous hearts, the more shall we acknowledge the propriety of the thought, and confess to the possibilities of danger it suggests. For so long as we find it true that danger and defeat may be nearest just in the hour when victory seems completest, so long as we see it the case that men who have conquered in the greatest temptations may live to fall a prey to the meanest—so long is there room for the message, 'Having done all . . . stand.'

2. In order that we may fulfil the one duty of standing there are three duties that we must engage in.

(1) We must *watch*. That the assault has been met and triumphantly withstood, that the difficulty has been faced and signally overcome, this, God knows, is no reason for our ceasing to fear that ere long the old temptations may return, or new temptations take their place, directed from unsuspected quarters, presented in unfamiliar shapes. And even were there no reason to fear on account of these, there is abundant reason to fear for oneself. Fear, lest in the thrill of success the head begins to reel and the feet begin to slip, and it prove true of a spiritual victory, as it continually holds true of temporal successes, that the prosperity of the unwary shall slay them. And fear, not only in the day when a past conflict has elated us, but in the day when, as is sometimes the case, a past conflict has depressed us. Are there not times in men's history when, after strength has been spent, and wrestling has ceased, and the tension of strife and endeavour has relaxed, the terrible reaction sets in, in faintness, in languor, and in restlessness,—leaving the whole nature limp and unknit, drained and exhausted—more like the mood of a man defeated than the mood of a man victorious? Seldom is a life so open to the assaults and temptations of the foe as it is on occasions like these.

¶ Raymund Lull, that early missioner, once fell a prey to this fear. To quote his biographer: Lull determined to set out as a missionary indeed to propagate the faith among the Moslems of Africa. He was at this time fifty-six years old, and travel in those days was full of hardship by land and by sea. It was a bold step that Lull undertook. But he counted not his life dear in the project, and was ready, so he thought, to venture all on the issue.

He left Paris for Genoa, which was then the rival of Venice. At Genoa the story of Lull's life was not unknown. Men had heard with wonder of the miraculous conversion of the gay and dissolute seneschal; and now it was whispered that he had devised a new and certain method for converting the 'infidel' and was setting out all alone for the shores of Africa. The expectations of the people were raised to a high pitch. A vessel was found ready to sail for Africa and Lull's' passage was engaged. The ship was lying in the harbour; the missionary's books, even, had been conveyed on board. All was ready for the voyage and the venture.

But at this juncture a change came over him. Lull says that he was 'overwhelmed with terror at the thought of what might befall him in the country whither he was going. The idea of enduring torture or lifelong imprisonment presented itself with such force that he could not control his emotions.' Such a strong reaction after his act of faith in leaving Paris must not surprise us. Similar

experiences are not rare in the lives of missionaries. Henry Martyn wrote in his journal as the shores of Cornwall were disappearing: 'Would I go back? Oh, no. But how can I be supported? My faith fails. I find, by experience, I am as weak as water. O my dear friends in England, when we spoke with exultation of the missions to the heathen, what an imperfect idea did we form of the sufferings by which it must be accomplished!' Lull had to face a darker and more uncertain future than did Martyn. His faith failed. His books were taken back on shore and the ship sailed without him.[1]

> It was not in the open fight
> We threw away the sword,
> But in the lonely watching
> In the darkness by the ford.[2]

(2) We must *work*. Because we have engaged in one kind of Christian activity, and completed it with success, earning the thanks of our fellows, the approval of our conscience, the 'well done' of our God—we are not absolved from further effort. The decline of Christian character one sometimes has reason to lament, when men who seem to have 'done all' fail in the end even to stand, lies just in deficiency at this point. Such men rest on the past. They consider they have done all that ought reasonably to be looked for, and have purchased exemption and the right to look on and criticise while others are working for Christ in their stead. But what danger this involves to the man himself! It places him at the mercy of a host of temptations. It leaves his life and his character open to a whole class of influences, which will weaken and depreciate them in a way of which he is scarcely aware. It gives rise to a narrowness of sympathy, a selfishness and a paltriness of view, a petty sensitiveness as regards oneself, and a spirit of consciousness towards others, till the man becomes a shrivelled and melancholy remnant of his former self.

¶ Of all Collier's gifts as a worker the thing in him at which—if for the moment I may speak in the first person—I wondered most, which rebuked and shamed me again and again, was his power to *walk and not faint*. I used to link him in my mind with George Adam Smith's interpretation of the great prophetic word. To *mount up with eagles*—that is much; to *run and not be weary*—that is more; but, most of all is it to *walk and not faint*. And Collier could do that. Anybody could get up a 'sprint' for five minutes; he could grind along the dusty road for a day and still not be spent. Professor W. Sellar, it is said, once remarked to Matthew Arnold, 'What a good man —— is.' 'Ah,' sighed Arnold back again, 'we were all so good at Rugby.' 'Yes,' retorted Sellar, 'but he kept it up.' And this is the great thing at which we marvel, and for which we give God thanks, in Collier: not simply that he loved so greatly and planned so wisely, but that he 'kept it up,' and kept it up to the very end.

'Jackson,' he said to me one day in a characteristic outburst, 'the trouble with so many of our fellows is that they so soon lose their "fizz."' But Collier never lost his 'fizz'; he never knew the 'uncourageous elder years' which come to so many who begin life with high and generous hopes.[1]

(3) We must *pray*.—Pray, of course, in the hour of conflict; pray especially when the conflict is over, and the victory won. Take the case of Christ Himself. His fellowship with the Father not merely preceded His labours, but followed them. And it followed them not only as thanksgiving, though no doubt thanksgiving was there, but as an influence to refresh, to confirm, to calm, and to prepare. Did He, in whom all fullness of grace dwelt, as it never dwelt in any who have toiled and sorrowed on this sorrowful and toilsome earth, need the steadying and composing assistance of prayers such as these; and shall we, in our fickleness, frailty, and defilement, neglect them? Let no task be done, then, let no temptation be vanquished, let no grace be attained, without their result in an increase of prayer. It is in the exercise of prayer, and in this alone, that we

[1] *Raymund Lull*, 80.
[2] Rudyard Kipling.

[1] George Jackson, *Collier of Manchester*, 95, 96.

can truly estimate their nature, clearly forecast their effects, and strengthen the weakness or subdue the pride that springs from them. So, and so only, having done what He bade us, shall we stand. Happy is he that watcheth always; happy is he that worketh always; and happy is he that prayeth always!

¶ Preaching lately the anniversary sermon of the West London Mission, Dr. Hutton dealt with our Lord's habit of falling back upon prayer to His Father in the hour of crisis. Once He said to His disciples, 'Men ought always to pray and not to faint.' The Bible was a great book on fainting, or at any rate on not fainting, said the preacher, for the New Testament never mentioned the word 'faint' without a 'not' being alongside it. Its great teaching was this—'To those who are about to faint, DON'T!' When you faint you fall back on nothing, added Dr. Hutton, but when you pray you fall back on God.[1]

'Stand Fast!'

Eph. vi. 14.—'Stand therefore.'

A SOLDIER, simply standing at his post, that was what St. Paul had seen many a time in Rome, and it suggested one of the noblest passages he ever wrote. A soldier, with his brazen helmet, and his breastplate, and his girdle with the short sharp sword in it, and his sandals laced about his feet, and his great shield by his side—all helping Paul to some added touch of lifelikeness in that 'whole armour of God' which he would have Christ's people put on. But in all that passage, the two most suggestive words are just those two —'Stand, therefore!'

¶ Those Roman soldiers could stand! Do you know what is about the noblest thing they show you in that long buried city, Pompeii? An old rusted helmet and breastplate that were found, with a few human bones, in the little stone sentry-box just by the city gate. All other skeletons were found hiding away in cellars, or fallen in the streets beneath the awful shower of mud and ashes from the volcano—fallen as they were flying for dear life. For there was time for almost everyone to fly, and very few perished except those who lingered too long getting together their treasures. So that it seems that this Roman soldier, when all the city was flying through the gates and rushing by him, must simply have stood at his post, and died there. We do not know that his helmet and breastplate meant to him all that they suggested to Paul, of salvation and righteousness and faith, but they stood for a certain soldierly trust and honour; probably they had never been disgraced by flight; and they must not be; and though that great black cloud, and the falling ashes and the sweltering, choking air, were no enemies that he could do anything against, still he seems to have felt that if there was nothing else he could do, he could at least stand; and so he stood,—and died.

1. But if standing is often the only thing to be done, it is often very hard to do. Sometimes and to some people it is the very hardest thing. Some noble natures can do almost anything in the way of action, but find it very hard to stand. One of the most pathetic things in the gospel story is John the Baptist sending to Jesus to ask if He were the one that should come, or 'look we for another?' When he first saw and acknowledged Jesus by the Jordan he had no doubt. But now he was in prison; and, to his strong nature this confinement, this having simply to stand, was so hard that he chafed like a caged eagle. He begins to wonder why Jesus, if He is the Messiah, does not begin the new revolution which all men believed Messiah was to lead; and so he sends to Him, at last, that downcast word: 'Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?' A shade of the same dispiritedness creeps out even in Paul himself, in that word from his prison at Rome: 'I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.' Paul—only in the fifties, and talking about wanting to quit the battle! But he recalls himself in a moment—going

[1] *Methodist Recorder*, May 17, 1923.

on to say that perhaps it is better for his converts, to whom he was writing, that he should abide: 'And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide,'—but there is the note of weariness in those former words, as if he found it hard simply to stand and wait.

And if it is so hard even to those stronger natures, what must it be to the rank and file of men? There is no element in the world's busy life that so touches us as that of the patient standing fast—steadfastness—of men, in the midst of toils and cares and sufferings and sore weariness. We love all deeds of heroism, every noble act that comes to us from mine, or battlefield, or shipwreck. These are what stir the blood in youth, and none of us ever gets too old to feel his pulse quickened by them. But as we grow older it is the element of endurance, manful, patient standing that takes most hold of us. And indeed it is the hardest. It is not the charging that tries the soldier most, but the standing under fire, or the trench or outpost duty exposed to unknown peril in one fixed place; or lying wounded the long night through upon the field. And yet, what, after all, are these exceptional heroisms to that heroism of standing which is involved in the common battle of the work-a-day world? Talk if you will of the enterprise which pushes its way over seas and plains and mountains, and compasses the world to plant the colonies of Freedom or the settlements of Commerce—it is just as hard a part which those have to play who follow, after that first adventurousness, and have quietly to stand and hold the posts that have been so planted.

¶ When I call to mind the Pilgrim Fathers, the thought that most stirs me, is not of the little band sailing away from Europe to their noble exile—that was the active part, and the easiest; it is the thought of that first winter in the new land, when they had just to hold their ground, and half their number died, and yet they stood to their post and slowly wrought, in patient, prosaic tasks, the founding of the new England. And so in the humbler line of business life—it may be the adventurous speculator, continually dazzling the commercial world by some new enterprise, who forces men to think of him. But the real commerce which builds up the world is not done by such men, but by the multitudes who, in their unnoticed posts of industry, simply stand, year after year, doing a full, true work. The common speech of men has constant hints of this. If you are investigating a horse, you ask about his doing; but if you want to find the worth of a man, you ask about his standing. The world rather distrusts men who are chiefly remarkable for their pace; they want the quality of life which can not only do, and go, but—stand.[1]

¶ It is told of a young gunner, that when he was describing the critical moment, he said that in the thick of the fight one could not see five yards in front of the gun, and did not know how the battle was going. It was impossible to tell whether he was surrounded by comrades or enemies. 'What did you do then?' inquired the one to whom he was recounting his story. 'What did I do?' he replied. 'I just stood by my gun.' That is our task, just to stand where God has placed us.[2]

The Girdle.

Eph. vi. 14.—'Stand therefore, having your loins girt about (RV 'having girded your loins') with truth.'

The first piece of armour which the Christian warrior has to take up, if he is to win the battle which he has to fight, is a purely defensive one—the girdle of truth. The order in which these various parts of the armour of the Christian soldier are enumerated is the exact order in which the Roman soldier was accustomed to put them on. St. Paul, now a prisoner at Rome, chained to a soldier, and daily surrounded by soldiers, would constantly see their preparation for drill and martial exercises He would notice, naturally, that the two first pieces of armour taken up were the girdle, defending the lower part of

[1] B. Herford, *Courage and Cheer*, 63ff.
[2] J. C. Carlile, *Vision and Vocation*, 129.

the body, and the breastplate, defending the upper half.

1. The girdle was an important article of dress in old times. Without it the loose flowing garments became very cumbersome, flapping about the feet, and especially hindering the movements in a hostile wind. Even the most graceful attire became an entanglement unless the girdle held it in serviceable bonds. A fine kind was made of linen embroidered with silk. 'I girded thee about with fine linen' (Ezek. xvi. 10). Others were wrought with gold or silver thread, while others were studded with precious stones or pearls.

The soldier's girdle, or belt, was not like the belt that our soldiers wear, used merely for fastening the dress together, or for attaching the sword to it. The Roman soldier's girdle was far more important, as a piece of armour, than our soldier's belt. It was a very wide, strongly-knit belt, made of stiff leather, the leather itself being covered on the outside with metal plates, so that when firmly fastened round the loins it secured the trunk, or at any rate its lower part, from injury in the fight. It was, moreover, essential to the soldier during the shock of defence or attack, as it helped to give him a firm stand on the ground; hence these opening words, 'Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth.'

2. We must be braced up if we are to fight. Concentration and tension of power is an absolute necessity for any effort, no matter how poor may be the aims to which it is directed; and what is needed for the successful prosecution of the lowest transient successes will surely not be less indispensable in the highest forms of life. 'This one thing I do' is the secret of all successful doing, and obedience to the command of Jesus, 'let your loins be girded about,' is indispensable, if we would avoid polluting contact with evil. His other command associated with it will never be accomplished without it. The lamps will not be burning unless the loins are girt. Concentration and bracing up is needful, if any of the rest of the great exhortations which follow are to be fulfilled.

Paul here is in beautiful accord with his brother Peter, who begins all the exhortations of his Epistle with the words, 'Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope perfectly upon the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Peter, indeed, is not thinking of the soldier's belt, but he is, no doubt, remembering many a time when, in the toils of the fishing-boat, he had to tighten his robes round his waist to prepare for tugging at the oar, and he feels that such concentration is needful if a Christian life is ever to be sober, and to have its hope set perfectly on Christ and His grace.

3. It is the loins that are protected with the girdle. Now the loins in man are the seat of the muscular system. Many vital organs find their centre there, and in them is the spring of muscular action. Their free and easy movement is impeded by full and flowing robes which flutter in the breeze and prevent the full play of the limbs. Nothing should be allowed to embarrass the athlete or the soldier in the race or the battle. In the parallel passage already quoted Peter speaks of the 'loins of the mind.' The word used is '*dianoia*,' and it generally refers in the New Testament to the intellect or understanding. Therefore the thoughts, intentions, desires, and motives of human nature are included in the phrase, and the absolute necessity of keeping them braced up so as to be definite, firm, clear, and healthy is enforced. This interpretation is the more natural because all moral action must take its rise in the mind, and primarily from the thoughts engendered there. 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he' (Prov. xxiii. 7).[1]

Thoughts, desires, determinations, actions, and then the issues of life. This is the natural succession of man's consciousness, by which character is built up and the man takes his stamp and impress for ever. The loins of the

[1] L. L. Barclay, in *The Expository Times*, ii. 117.

mind concern the operations of man's higher qualities, involving the reason, the will, the judgment, and other noble faculties. These are all to be gathered up and firmly held by the girdle of truth, than which nothing can be more beautiful or efficient. At the root of all the mind's workings are the thoughts, which are the true index of character. The Bible touches the springs of life when it speaks of 'the thoughts and imaginations of the heart.' The thoughts that rise secretly and spontaneously in the mind form the man.

Thoughts are incited within the man by objects which attract and hold them. The miser thinks of wealth, and its attainment becomes an insanity with him. The roué thinks of sensual pleasure and becomes a voluptuary, and the philanthropist thinks of deeds of self-denial and becomes a benefactor to his generation. Thus the thoughts stamp the man—they give him his superscription. To think much upon an object is to seek it, and seeking means life or death. It is a mournful thing when a man's thoughts are loose or unstable; when he has no fixed aims and no high ideals. It is worse still when his thoughts are immoral and degrading.

¶ In this silent workshop of the human brain is formed in microscopic miniature all the originals of man's outward doings. Here is the home of genius and the secret of life's failures. In this chamber murder is first committed or the holiest acts of charity first performed. All virtue was first born here and all vice here first took shape. And because these were first mentally enacted they were afterwards performed outwardly. Every act is twice performed, and the second doing is the child of the first.[1]

The Girdle of Truth.

Eph. vi. 14.—'Having your loins girt about with truth.'

The girdle is truth. But what is truth?

1. It has been taken to mean the gospel. St. Paul, says Dr. Jowett, is thinking of a soul belted with the more distinctive truth of the Scriptures, a soul girt about with gospel truth and with the ample promises of God. He is thinking of a man who takes some great truth of revelation, some mighty word of life, or some broad and bracing promise of grace, and who belts it about his soul and wears it on active service in seeking to do the sovereign will.

¶ It is one of the strong characteristics of Luther that he is ever wearing the girdle of truth, and bracing himself with the promises of grace. I open his letters almost at random, in the great year of his life when he defied the Pope, and opposed himself to the strength of uncounted hosts. He is writing to Melanchthon on May 26, 1521: 'Do not be troubled in spirit; but sing the Lord's song in the night, as we are commanded, and I shall join in. Let us only be concerned about the Word.' There you find him putting on the girdle! Once again I find him writing a letter to a poor little company of Christians at Wittenberg: 'I send you this thirty-seventh Psalm for your consolation and instruction. Take comfort and remain steadfast. Do not be alarmed through the raging of the godless.' There again he is wearing the girdle and urging others to wear it. His loins are girt about with truth.

Then again there is John Wesley. Let me give you a glimpse of that noble servant of the spirit as he is putting on the girdle of truth: 'When I opened the New Testament at five o'clock in the morning my eyes fell on the words, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." ' He girt his loins with that truth. 'Just before I left the room I opened the Book again, and this sentence gleamed from the open page, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." ' And he girt himself with that promise. He went to St. Paul's that morning, and in the chant there came to him this personal message from the Word: 'O Israel, hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from

[1] C. F. Walpole, *The Building of Personality*, 70.

all his iniquities.' Do you not see this noble knight belting himself for the great crusade that even now awaits him at the gate?[1]

2. But the truth of the gospel is rather included in the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and it is best to regard the phrase 'with (literally 'in') truth' here as having its ordinary meaning, of which we may take as examples the phrases, 'the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth'; 'love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth'; 'whom I love in truth.' Absolute sincerity and transparent truthfulness may well be regarded as the girdle which encloses and keeps secure every other Christian grace and virtue.

Unreality, insincerity, untruthfulness in any form are fatal to the cohesion and strength of the Christian man; no man can stand if he is false within. Take truthfulness away from the character, and there is no character left, or at best it is a heterogeneous jumble of qualities without support or firmness. Take truthfulness from society, and there is nothing left on which we can depend. It is the one quality that fastens society together, and that gives it its moral stability. An old Latin proverb says, 'unless the vessel be clean'—'sincere' is the Latin word—'whatever you put into it turns sour'; and so, too, any want of truthfulness of character destroys or injures every other quality of life.

There are many of us who, in a real though terribly imperfect sense, hold the truth, but who know nothing, or next to nothing, of its power to make us truthful. If it is to be of any use to us, we must make it ours in a far deeper sense than it is ours now; for many of us the girdle has been but carelessly fastened and has worked loose, and because, by our own fault, we have not 'abode in the truth,' it has come to pass that there is 'no truth in us.' We have set before us in the text the one condition on which all Christian progress depends, and if by any slackness we loosen the girdle of truthfulness, and admit into our religious life any taint of unreality, if our prayers say just a little more than is quite true, and our penitence a little less, we shall speedily find that hypocrisy and trivial insincerity are separated by very narrow limits. Before we can come before God we must put off self (lies, hypocrisy, etc.), and put on truth. Without the guileless nature which hides nothing, we have not taken the first step towards communion with Him.

¶ Zoroaster saw this many years before the coming of Christ, and the beauty of his cult lies in the stress laid upon this virtue. The Egyptians understood it, for their priests wore the sapphire image of truth around their necks. And what is, in any case, the most ancient, if not the most correct, interpretation of the mysterious Urim and Thummim of the old dispensation points them out as signifying respectively light and truth.[1]

¶ The Duke of Wellington said of Sir Robert Peel, who was a type of the English statesman, 'I never knew a man in whose truth and justice I had a more lively confidence. I never knew an instance in which he did not show the strongest attachment to truth, and I never saw in the whole course of my life the smallest reason for suspecting that he stated anything which he did not firmly believe to be the fact.'[2]

Think truly, and your thoughts shall a world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and your words shall be a good and faithful seed;
Live truly, and your life shall be a great and noble deed.

[1] J. H. Jowett, *The Whole Armour of God*, 25.

The Breastplate.

Eph. vi. 14.—'Having on the breastplate of righteousness.'

THE word 'breastplate' is very inaccurate and misleading. The piece of armour to which the Apostle refers protected the back as well as the breast, and in addition it gave protection to the neck and the hips. It would be much

[1] L. L. Barclay, in *The Expository Times*, ii. 118.
[2] W. J. Armitage, *The Soldiers of the King*, 37.

more truly described by the phrase, 'a coat of mail,' because it was a sort of vest made of small metal plates, overlapping one another like shield upon shield, wrapping the body in its defences, and protecting the vital organs, back and front, from every assault of the foe.

¶ Skins of beasts were probably the earliest material used to protect the breast of the soldier. These were abandoned when the art of working in metals had attained a measure of perfectness; and the use of iron, steel, and brass for the purpose of the cuirass or breastplate became common. The Egyptians made their breastplates of eleven rows of metal plates, well secured by brass pins; but many were made of felt or linen, with scales of iron or copper fastened to them. The Jews wore a coat of mail made of brass, or sometimes of leather covered with brazen scales. In later days scale or ringed armour was worn, with many other kinds, some being richly damascened and engraved. The breastplate was made to fit to the body, and generally came to the loins; sometimes it was made longer, so as to cover the middle of the body. But in any case it was made strong so as to shield the heart and lungs from the sword thrust or the pointed arrow.[1]

1. The first question that arises as we ponder this defensive armour is, What is the righteousness which is here called the 'breastplate' of a Christian soldier? Is it the righteousness that God imputes to the sinner when he believes in Christ, or is it the believer's personal righteousness arising from his conformity to the will of God?

The answer is that it is both. Righteousness must be understood in its full Pauline meaning. It is the state of one who is right with God and with God's law. It is the righteousness both of standing and of character, of imputation and of impartation, which begins with justification and continues in the new, obedient life of the believer. These are never separate in the true doctrine of grace. 'The righteousness which is of God by faith' is the soul's main defence against the shafts of Satan. It wards off deadly blows, both from this side and from that. Does the enemy bring up against me my old sins? I can say: 'It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?' Am I tempted to presume on my forgiveness, and to fall into transgression once more? From this breastplate the arrow of temptation falls pointless, as it resounds: 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous. . . . Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.' The completeness of pardon for past offence and the integrity of character that belong to the justified life are woven together into an impenetrable mail.

Let us seek for light in St. Paul's own life —for he is a soldier as well as a counsellor— and we shall find him following his own advice and wearing the armour which he recommends to others. Let us listen to this word, and let us mark its significance: 'Touching the righteousness which is in the law found blameless.' That seems like an invincible protection. 'Touching the righteousness which is in the law found blameless!' But there was nothing invincible about it. It was no more a coat of mail than an ordinary vest, and the devil smote through the defences a dozen times a day.

Listen again to the Apostle when he has passed into the intimate friendship of Christ: 'Not having a righteousness of mine own.' Mark that; 'Not having a righteousness of mine own.' This coat of mail he wears is not his own righteousness. Whose, then, is it? It is the righteousness of Christ. As Paul declares: It is the righteousness 'which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' The Apostle is wearing the righteousness of Christ, and he wears it like a coat of mail, covering back and front, shielding him before and behind.

(1) Jesus Christ was absolutely righteous, so righteous that human imagination and human dream cannot conceive it excelled. His holy obedience was perfect. There was no rent in the vesture of His holiness. There was no frayed edge, there was no imperfect strand,

[1] W. J. Townsend, *As a King ready to the Battle*, 41.

there were no stains. 'In him was no sin.' We must begin there.

(2) Next, the Scriptures tell us that the holy Saviour covers the sinner with the robe of His own righteousness. The Lord puts His merits on to the sinner who has no merits. He puts His obedience on to the sinner who has nothing but a record of disobedience. He puts His spiritual conquests on to the sinner who is torn and scarred by nothing but appalling defeats. He puts His holiness on to the sinner who has been raked by defilements. That is the proclamation of the gospel. That poor, penitent, believing sinner stands now before the devil, and before men and angels, and before the presence of God, clothed in the righteousness of Christ!

¶ Have we not read of one who wrapped himself in his country's flag and then dared an alien power to fire? It is an altogether imperfect illustration, but it offers me some faint and helpful analogy when I hear the saints give this witness: 'He hath clothed me with the robe of righteousness, and covered me with the garments of salvation.' No, it was not Paul's own righteousness which constituted his coat of mail. It was the righteousness of his Lord.

It was this which John Bunyan found, and of which he tells us in the pages of *Grace Abounding:* 'One day, as I was passing into the field, and that too with some dashes of my conscience, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, "Thy righteousness is in heaven," and methought that I saw with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at God's right hand. There, I saw, was my righteousness; so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, He wants my righteousness, for that was just before Him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse; for my righteousness was Jesus Christ Himself, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed; I was loosened from my afflictions and irons. . . . Now went I also home rejoicing for the grace and love of God.'[1]

(3) The figure of a coat of mail, like all figures, is imperfect. A leprous sinner wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness! It all appears detached and superficial, like a climbing rose hiding a rubbish heap, or some lovely ferns and greenery concealing an open sewer. There appears no deep reality in it—a sinner just covered with the robe of Christ's holiness, and wearing the Lord's' righteousness as a coat of mail. Yes, the figures all fail. The figure of a robe leaves the sinner and the Saviour in no vital relation. And so it is with the coat of mail. But in the blessed reality there is no detachment. There is union of the most profound and vital kind between the sinner and the Saviour. You must remember our assumption: the sinner who comes to the Saviour comes in faith, and in penitence and in prayer; and these things never leave a soul separate and detached from the life and love of the Lord. A poor penitent sinner who comes to the Lord in faith becomes one with the Lord in the profoundest union which the mind of man can conceive.

¶ The righteousness of Christ, that imputed righteousness becomes progressively mine in the appropriation of experience. His life flows into me like the life of stock into scion, and all through my days I am assimilating more and more the righteousness which covers me. His covering righteousness becomes more my rectitude. His covering holiness becomes more and more my obedience. His righteousness passes more and more into my conscience and makes it holy; more and more into my affections and makes them lovely; more and more into my will to make it rich and dutiful in obedience.[2]

Since Eden, it keeps the secret!
Not a flower beside it knows
To distil from the day the fragrance
And beauty that flood the rose.

[1] J. H. Jowett, *The Whole Armour of God*, 54.
[2] *Ibid.*, 62.

Silently speeds the secret
From the loving eye of the sun
To the willing heart of the flower:
The life of the twain is one.

Folded within my being,
A wonder to me is taught,
Too deep for curious seeing
Or fathom of sounding thought.

Of all sweet mysteries holiest!
Faded are rose and sun!
The Highest hides in the lowliest;
My Father and I are one.[1]

3. The breastplate is a piece of armour that is seen of all men. Next to the helmet or shield, it is perhaps the most conspicuous part of the Christian warrior's armour, gleaming in polished metal on his breast. And in like manner the righteousness of the Christian man is that part of the Christian life which is constantly manifested to all men. There is no service that we can render to Christ more valuable than the service of a righteous life. That professing Christian whose religion is like his Sunday clothes, worn only on Sunday, but whose life in the world is crooked and dark, is not merely injuring his own soul, he is injuring the cause of Christ.

¶ Henry Clay once said in America, in a great speech, 'I would rather be right than the President of the United States'; and the Christian warrior who fights for Christ would rather die than part with his breastplate of righteousness. It is a man's life in the world that tells. See a man in his daily life, in his home, in his amusements, in his business, amongst his friends; and if you find him doing what is right in every relation of life, you know he is a good man; he is wearing the breastplate of righteousness.[2]

[1] Charles Gordon Ames.
[2] G. S. Barrett, *The Whole Armour of God*, 32.

The Sandals.

Eph. vi. 15.—'Having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.'

1. The shoes or sandals worn in olden times—for both were in use—were made of leather, felt, cloth or wood. They were sometimes ornamented, inwrought with lines of gold, silver or silk, and occasionally embroidered with jewels. They were often bound with iron, to which practice the promise refers: 'Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.' It was equally necessary to keep the feet guarded whether on a journey or in a battle. Roads were little cared for in Eastern lands, and the feet were liable to be torn by quicks and briars in the way, or, more often still, venomous reptiles or insects would suddenly sting and poison the feet that were unprotected. Many roads were filled with rough stones which cut the feet, so that to be well shod was imperative for travellers.

In the Roman Empire scrupulous care was given to the feet of the fighting men. The shoes were specially made, not only for long marches, but for protection against the secret dangers of the way. In those days they had not arrived at our refinements in devilry, but some of their subtleties occasioned great destruction. Gall-traps were set along the road, multitudes of sharp sticks, keen as dagger points, were inserted in its surface to obstruct the advance of an enemy, and to maim his soldiers and compel them to fall out by the way. And so it was an imperative necessity that the Roman soldier should be well shod, his feet made easy for the most exacting march, and thus defended against the hidden perils which would maim him in service and spoil him for the fray. The soles of the sandals were therefore thickly studded with hobnails.

Shod in such shoes these ancient conquerors of the world stood ready to march in obedience to orders, along any road, to any field, whenever and wherever the trumpet called. So, says St. Paul to his readers, be shod with pre-

paredness, with brisk readiness to do whatever your Christian calling requires and demands of you. Be always in marching order, swift to answer the occasion, to follow the course in response to the pointing of conscience, or the dictate of your best thought. It reminds one, somewhat, of Wordsworth's 'Happy Warrior,' who, if he be called to face some arduous moment to which heaven has joined great issues,

Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or, if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need . . .
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray.

¶ 'Shod with the *preparation* of the gospel,' 'shod with preparedness to run on the message of peace,'—is that all we should expect from the walk of Christian life? To *prepare* to run seems a small thing. Why does not Paul say that the feet of the soldier of Christ have been hardened by the actual running—strengthened, not by the *preparation*, but by the *proclamation*, of the gospel? Because, if he had said that, he would have cut off the larger part of the army. It is only a limited number of Christ's soldiers who are allowed to serve in the field; the most part have to be content with *readiness* to serve. The souls who do great things in the world are the minority; the mass can only will to do them. I may say, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,' and yet my own feet may be moveless. I may be forbidden to join the band of active workers. I may be an invalid. I may be weighted with the care of an invalid. I may be struggling with poverty. I may be a victim of nerves. I may be cumbered with much household service. I may be hopelessly commonplace. In all these things my Father says to me 'Stay at home.' But, spite of all these things, I have the will to go; I would go if these did not forbid me; I do go in spirit every day. I carry messages with the feet of my heart. I am armed with the *preparation* to be a Christian soldier—with the readiness to serve if service were possible. I have given to God my will to give, and He has accepted it as my uniform; He has ordered me a soldier's pay.[1]

2. The readiness of the Christian warrior is the readiness that belongs to the bearer of good tidings. There were ringing in Paul's head some echoes of the music of Isaiah's words. 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good!' But there is a great deal more than an unconscious quotation of ancient words here; for in Paul's thought the one power which brings a man into harmony with the universe and to peace with himself is the power which proclaims that God is at peace with him. And Jesus Christ is our peace, because He has swept away the root or bitter fountain of all the disquiet of men's hearts, and all their chafing at providences—the consciousness that there is discord between themselves and God. The gospel brings peace in the deepest sense of that word, and, primarily, peace with God, from out of which all other kinds of tranquillity and heart-repose come—and they come from nothing besides.

3. But St. Paul is alluding not merely to the blessed truth believed and experienced by these Ephesian Christians, that the gospel brought peace, and was the only thing that did, as the singular emergence of the idea that the gospel was a peace-bringing power in the midst of fighting. It brings us peace first, and then it says to us, 'Now, having got peace in your heart, because peace with God, go out and fight to keep it.' For, if we are warring with the devil we are at peace with God; and if we are at peace with the devil we are warring with God. So the two states of peace and war go together. There is no

[1] G. Matheson, *Searchings in the Silence*, 70.

real peace that has not conflict in it, and the gospel *is* 'the gospel of peace,' precisely because it enlists us in Christ's army and sends us out to fight Christ's battles.

¶ Peace means something more for us, after all these stormy ages, than the restoration of the unconscious serenity and concord of Eden; just as the childlike man, whom the Lord designates as the true child of the Kingdom, implies something more, something higher, larger, deeper, stronger, more lasting, more fruitful, than the half-conscious simplicity of childhood, which is yet its prophetic image. Peace to man, after all these ages of storm and strife, of bloody conflict, of tormenting discord, through which humanity has struggled wearily on its way, means something unspeakably beautiful and blessed. It means the final taming and the firm control by an enlightened and purified will of all the selfish greed and lawless passion which have made the tracks of our proud civilization one great field of blood. It means the throning of righteousness, God's righteousness—a righteousness which receives its law from Heaven, and rules itself by the eternal standards—in all human consciences. It means the occupation by human society of that basis of fellowship, of concord, of concert between man and man, which was laid by God in the very constitution of our nature, and which God's Word rediscovers to us in bearing witness against that sin by which it was obscured. It means governments purely, justly, wisely observant of the true welfare of the people. It means peoples loyally resting in the wise and provident care of their rulers, and sustaining their hands by intelligent concert in all that concerns the public good. It means the rich and powerful firmly convinced that they are the stewards and ministers of a great trust which has been committed to them. It means poor men conscious that justice reigns in the hearts of their social superiors, and that everything is done which in the nature of things can be done. It means the nations of the world bound in the bands of a universal brotherhood, a great humanity of which they are the limbs and organs, in whose weal they are made glad, by whose woe they are made sad, having the same care and charge of each other's well-being as eye has of hand and brain of heart; a brotherhood in which, as in a shrine, a spirit abides which was born from a higher world than this, and shall survive its wreck. It means love, Divine love—and there is no other love pure enough and deep enough to satisfy all human claims and needs—filling all hearts with tenderness, all eyes with meekness, all hands with ministry, all lips with truth, all homes, all tribes, all nations, with peace. It means the day when the tabernacle of God shall be with men, when 'God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations,' when 'they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations,' when 'the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose'; when all tears shall be wiped from off all faces, and the days of the mourning of humanity shall be ended for ever.[1]

The Sandals of Readiness.

Eph. vi. 15.—'Having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.'

THESE are surely the feet of a herald, shod for swift and ready movement. This is a cheery courier, bright in his alertness, prompt and eager to carry abroad the good news of redeeming grace. He is like a man whose feet are nimble, whose shoes are exactly the right size and shape; giving him comfort and freedom, enabling him to stride out on any road, and to walk all day without fagging. Is there anything more harassing, more embarrassing than ill-fitting shoes, or shoes that are loosely tied? Is there anything more wearying than shoes that pinch and cripple you? They add dead weight to all your movement. But to have just the right shoes, wedded to your feet in perfect union—they almost add wings to your feet. And this is the simile which is used to describe the feet of the herald of the Lord. There is to be a comfort and a nimbleness

[1] J. Baldwin Brown, *The Battle of Life*, 56.

about his feet, a preparedness and readiness of movement, an immediateness and a swiftness which will make him spring to the call of his Master, and speed upon his errand along any road, and not stumble. Such is the man who is now before us—a winged-footed man, ready for any charge. The sudden call finds him ready for the road.

¶ 'How soon can you be ready' said Mr. Gladstone to General Gordon, when he proposed to send him to the Soudan. 'I am ready now,' answered Gordon. His feet were shod with preparedness. In my Church in New York I saw sixty or seventy Salvation Army officers receive their commissions for home and foreign service. Not one of them had any idea where the commander would send him, whether to a New York slum, or to the slopes of the Rockies, or to the hinterland of Brazil, or to a crowded city in Japan. But they all stood in readiness, eager for their going, and as they received their commission they welcomed it with a salute, with a joyful 'Hallelujah,' or 'praise the Lord.' Their feet were shod with the preparedness of the gospel of peace.

It may be helpful to look at one or two heralds of this type as they are revealed to us in the Word of God.

1. Here, then, is one of them, 'As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome.' Great cities had a peculiar fascination for the Apostle Paul. He had a passion for their strategic centres. He coveted and courted them as the meeting-places of many roads, and he could send his gospel news up these great diverging roads to the ends of the world. Whenever a call came to him from a great city it stirred him like the sound of a trumpet. On the other hand, if he heard the trumpet calling to some smaller and quieter place he was shod in readiness for the journey, and the little place became to him the centre of the universe. And even when he went to big cities he was ready to join little fellowships. He was ready to go to Philippi, and when he got to Philippi he was ready to join a little company of women who met by the river-side to pray. Wherever the trumpet sounded his feet were ready for the road. Always ready! I do not wonder that at the end of life's long day his feet were still shod with the same grace, and that he faced the last bit of rough, dark road with this splendid confidence, 'I am now ready to be offered.'

2. Here is another Scriptural word which reveals the herald of the Lord. 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!' Surely it is the swiftness of the herald that is here so beautiful! The wearied folk in the city were watching every road on the mountain for the coming of the herald. Their eyes were strained with watching. But at length the herald appeared, and his very speed filled them with hope and cheer. No one would run as he was running unless he brought good news. A bringer of bad news would have fallen lame, or he would loiter, he would hang back in his depression, and he would defer his sad tale. But the man of good news would be breathless in the speed of his coming. 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!' Such a herald half tells his story before he arrives. His speed is part of his evangel. Who does not know such people? If we are in trouble they are at our door almost before we have made a cry. 'How soon you got here! However have you come?' The secret is here—their feet were shod with the readiness of the gospel of peace. Thrice blessed are they whose very speed is part of the message of grace.

3. Here is one who is described as 'ready to every good work.' That man wears fine shoes. They fit splendidly. They are good for any road, and, like the shoes which the three sisters showed Christian in the House Beautiful, 'they never wear out.' What lovely characters they are, these folk who are ready for any bit of work! They are not choosers of prominent places; they love the quieter posts just as well. If an outstanding mission falls to their lot they are ready. If it

is an obscure bit of work they are just as ready. If there's any gap to fill, 'ask Mrs. . . . she's alway's ready!' If there's a stretch of humdrum road to trudge 'ask Mr. . . . he is always ready!' Yes, the world owes nearly all its comfort and blessedness, under Christ, to those whose feet are shod with the preparedness of the gospel of peace.[1]

¶ '*Be shod with sandals!*' said the Master; so that, at a moment's notice, you may slip them *off* to welcome the vision or slip them *on* to take to the road. The crest of the Baptist Missionary Society is a picture of an ox between a plough and an altar, whilst, underneath the symbols are the words '*Ready for either!*' The ox is ready for service in the field or for sacrifice in the temple. Christ's minister stands between the glory and the majesty of things divine on the one hand and all the pathos and the prose of human life on the other. He must be ready at any moment to enter into fellowship with the skies; and he must be ready at any moment to hurry forth to see a sick child, to comfort a broken-hearted woman, or to share the burden of a man whose load is greater than he can bear. '*Be shod with sandals!*' so that, whether the Revelation or the Road shall call, you are ready for either. The ministry is neither mundane nor monastic; the minister wears sandals that he may keep in touch with two worlds.

Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by;
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,
Wise, foolish. So am I.

Let me turn not away from their smiles or their tears,—
Both parts of an infinite plan,—
Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man!

And there, in his house by the side of the road, the minister will welcome his wondrous visions, and will take good care to *be shod with sandals*. Gurnall concludes the first volume of his great work on *The Christian Armour* with 'Six Directions for the Helping On of this Spiritual Shoe'; but the man who is wise enough to wear sandals stands in no need of any such elaborate instructions.[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett, *Life in the Heights*, 135ff.

The Shield.

Eph. vi. 16.—'Withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.'

THE soldier has donned his panoply of mail. He is arrayed with his girdle, breastplate, and sandals. But one piece of armour was imperative in the ancient warfare, that the attacks made by the enemy might be effectually repelled. A dart from the foe may pierce some unguarded place. There may be an opening, however small, which may admit the arrow finely tipped and rancorous with poison. The vizor may not always be kept so closed but that a dart, skilfully thrown, may find an entrance. Therefore a shield was absolutely necessary to make the warrior invulnerable. So the Apostle gives the instruction: 'Withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.'

There were two kinds of shields in use in ancient warfare—one smaller, carried upon the arm, and which could be used, by a movement of the arm, for the defence of threatened parts of the body in detail; the other large, planted in front of the soldier, fixed in the ground, and all but covering his whole person. It is the latter which is referred to in the text, as the word which describes it clearly shows. That word is connected with the Greek word meaning 'door,' and gives a rough notion of the look of the instrument of defence—a great rectangular oblong, behind which a man could stand untouched and untouchable. And that is the kind of shield, says Paul, which we are to have—no little

[1] F. W. Boreham, *Rubble and Rosecleaves*, 179.

defence which may protect some part of the nature, but a great wall, behind which he who crouches is safe.

The shield, then, is the large heavy shield covering the whole body, in which the 'fiery darts'—that is, the arrows, with the points made red hot, or wrapped in burning tow (comp. Ps. vii. 14; cxx. 4)—may fix and burn themselves out without harm.

¶ Some people have found fault with this metaphor as being inaccurate. 'Fiery darts' were javelins, wrapped round with tow dipped in some inflammable liquid, and set on fire. They were, however, as far as we know, never used in hand to hand fighting; they were used for discharging at besieged places, or at wooden structures in the field; but not against individuals. That is very probable; it would at any rate be difficult to contradict it,—only it does not matter in the least. Like most other people who are very much in earnest, St. Paul was often careless about the finish of his style, the balance of his sentences, the accuracy of his illustrations. He says himself that he was rude in speech; whereby he meant that he paid little heed to the technicalities, or even to the proprieties, of rhetoric, so long as he could bring his meaning home to his hearers. He often used mixed metaphors, because no figure of speech would exactly suit his purpose; and his purpose was to him so overwhelmingly important that he altered his figure of speech as he went on, in order to suit that purpose. We have (it may be) an instance here.[1]

1. Now our whole being is capable of being set on fire, and 'set on fire of hell,' as James says. There are things in us all to which the fiery darts especially appeal: desires, appetites, passions, lusts, which 'war against the soul,' and which need only a touch of fire to flare up like a tar-barrel in thick foul smoke.

(1) There is the dart of *pride,* which arouses self-love and flatters self-will. It appeals to desire for position in society, to craving for wealth, to ambition for fame, and suggests unlawful methods to gain these ends, as was the case with Christ when the devil offered Him the kingdoms of the world on the condition that he should fall down and worship him.

¶ Poor Guizot! There he sat in his garret, full of high thought and fine theories, and visited sometimes by divine lights, and then comes the devil and tempts him with Secretaryships of State and Presidency of the Council, and such like, and leads him on and on into lies, and filth, and darkness, and then all at once lets him go, and down he falls into infinite night.[1]

(2) There is the dart of *envy,* leading to jealousy in every department of life, especially in certain professions; causing rivalry in business and bitterness among friends; resulting frequently in fraud, extravagance, and ruin.

¶ Envy ruins families; the story of Cinderella and her jealous sisters has never needed a commentary to explain it since the day when it was written. The crazy extravagance which is the curse of our social life is a child of envy. We set a sensible standard for our households, but someone else outpaces our less fevered steps and we whip up our speed to beat him if we can. We do not want to be outdone but must live in houses quite as large, wear clothes as fine, travel in automobiles as luxurious, and spend as freely as others do. Jealousy embitters all the class divisions that cut our American society asunder. It would be hard enough to solve the problem of poverty and wealth, of employee and employer, if it were purely economic. But it is everywhere complicated and embarrassed by jealousy. Thomas B. Reed once said: 'Whenever I walk through the streets of that democratic importing city of New York and look at the brown-stone fronts, my gorge always rises. . . . When I feel that way I know what the feeling is. It is good, honest, high-minded envy. When some other gentlemen have the same feeling they think it's political economy.'

What jealousy between nations does, each envying the power and wealth of others, is written in lines of blood and fire across the

[1] R. Winterbotham, *Sermons,* 417.

[1] Carlyle.

world. And even when one comes into sacred places where folk in organized philanthropy, social service, or the church are supposedly working unselfishly for the good of men, jealousy is as present as it was on that last night when the Master with His disciples ate the memorials of the sacrifice and 'there arose also a contention among them, which of them was accounted to be greatest.'[1]

(3) There is the dart of *evil passion,* which arouses every degrading desire of human nature, and is the cause of disease, misery, premature death, and infinite sorrow.

¶ The city of death is peopled with discrowned kings and queens expiating the crimes perpetrated by their untamed passions.[2]

(4) There is the dart of *unbelief,* which leads men to doubt and uncertainty as to the existence of God, the truth of Christ, the immortality of man, and, finally, as to any difference between right and wrong. No dart is more fiery than this, causing distraction of mind, morbid introspection, remorseful forebodings, and dreary regrets.

¶ It is part of his tragedy that he was occasionally visited during these difficult years by that eclipse of faith which neither mystic nor saint (so far as I know) has ever escaped, plunging out of unearthly light into darkness black as death, losing the sense of spiritual reality, and feeling himself not only forsaken of God but inhabiting a universe where God is not. *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!* is a cry which has been rung from the souls of honest saints down all the ages. To the mystic this terrible experience is so well known that it has lost its terrors, and he waits with folded hands and quiet breast for the return of the light; but to William Booth, the man of action, who knew little of the literature of mysticism, and who had rather taken the Kingdom of Heaven by storm than entered its gates with joy, this darkness of the soul was a symptom of something wrong within, and he agonized in his 'night of the soul' and rent his heart with hands of violence.[3]

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character,* 170.
[2] Elizabeth Gibson Cheyne, *The Man with the Mirror,* 48.
[3] *Life of William Booth,* ii. 61.

2. The shield against which the fiery darts are shot in vain is faith. Let us be quite clear as to what this faith is. It is not any intellectual solution of the problems and difficulties which beset us; if it were, it would not be faith. The mysteries remain, the difficulties are unsolved, but there is no burden in them; faith has lost the burden because of its trust in eternal righteousness and love. Nor is faith mere assent to certain truths, as we assent to the truth that there is a country we have never seen called China; or as we believe that Jupiter goes round the sun, although we have never seen it move. Faith in God is not the assent of the intellect, it is the trust of the heart. But even here we must be careful not to confound faith with feeling. It brings with it in its train feeling; for sooner or later the man who trusts God will feel God; but faith is no more feeling than health is the consciousness of health. It is the leaning of the heart, if we may so express it, on God. This is our shield, and our only shield, when we are assaulted by the fiery darts of the evil one.

(1) First of all faith cultivates the personal fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ. The ultimate concern of faith is not with a polity, not with a creed, not with a church, and not with a sacrament, but with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore the first thing we have to do if we wish to wear the shield of faith is to cultivate the companionship of the Lord. We must seek His holy presence. We must let His purpose enter into and possess our minds. We must let His promises distil into our hearts. And we must let our own hearts and minds dwell upon the Lord Jesus in holy thought and aspiration, just as our hearts and minds dwell upon the loved ones who have gone from our side. We must talk to Him in secret and we must let Him talk to us. We must consult Him about our affairs, and then take His counsels as our statutes, and pay such heed to them that the statutes will become our songs. Faith-life cultivates the friendship of Christ, and leans upon it, and surrenders itself with glorious abandon to the sovereign decrees of His grace and love.

(2) And then, secondly, the faith-life puts first things first, and in its list of primary values it gives first place to the treasures of the soul. Faith-life is more concerned with habits than with things, with character than with office, with self-respect than with popular esteem. The faith-life puts first things first, the clean mind and the pure heart, and from these it never turns its eyes away.

(3) And, lastly, the faith-life contemplates the campaign rather than the single battle. One battle may seem to go against it. But faith knows that one battle is not the end of the world. 'I will see you again, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy.' Faith takes the long view, the view of the entire campaign. 'I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.' 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord.' Such a relationship to the Lord protects our life as with an invincible shield. It may please God to conduct our life through long reaches of cloudless noon; the shield of faith will be our defence. It may please God to lead us through the gloom of a long and terrible night; the shield of faith will be our defence. 'Thou shalt not be afraid of . . . the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.'

Lord Christ, let me but hold Thy hand,
And all the rest may go.
For nothing is, but only seems,
And life is full of idle dreams,
Until Thyself we know.

The whole wide world is nought beside
The wonder of Thy love.
And though my state be mean and strait,
Give me but heart to work and wait,
And I have treasure-trove.[1]

The Helmet.

Eph. vi. 17.—'Take the helmet of salvation.'

1. The helmet is one of the few portions of the soldier's armour that has stood the hard test of the ages, and has come down to the twentieth century. It was worn by the soldier who fought for a Pharaoh of Egypt, for a Sennacherib of Assyria, for a Cæsar of Rome, for a William of Normandy, for a Marlborough of England, for a Napoleon of France, and for a Moltke of Germany. It has survived all changes, and is still with us. Its universal use and immense value in the Great War is known to everybody.

The defence of the head was a matter of supreme importance in ancient warfare. Layard notices that the earliest helmets found, those from the ruins of Nimroud, were of iron and copper. The early Assyrian, Grecian, and Roman helmets were practically close-fitting skull caps, covering the forehead, and reaching down to the nape of the neck.

¶ The helmets worn by the Romans were made either of leather (the *galea*) or of metal (the *cassis*). The helmet included plates to protect the cheeks, a band for the forehead, and a collar-like projection to protect the back of the neck. Such a helmet, when closed, showed little besides the eyes, nose, and mouth.[1]

As the heart needed to be guarded by a breastplate, so equally important was it to protect the head with a helmet. An arrow would as easily slay a man by piercing his brain as his heart, if it were left exposed to the foe.

2. The various pieces of the Christian armour seem to fall into three divisions. There are, first, our graces of *truth, righteousness, preparedness,* which, though they are all conceived as given by God, are yet the exercises of our own powers. There is, next, standing alone, as befits its all-comprehensive character, *faith,* which is able to ward against and overcome not merely this and that temptation, but all forms of evil. Faith is the root of the three preceding graces, and makes the transition to the two that follow, because it is the hand by which we lay hold of God's gifts. The two final parts of the Christian armour are God's gifts, pure and simple—

[1] John Oxenham.

[1] W. E. Barnes, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible,* ii. 347.

salvation, and *the word of God.* So the progress is from circumference to centre, from man to God. From the central faith we have, on the one hand, that which it produces in us; on the other, that which it lays hold of from God. And these two last pieces of armour being wholly God's gift, we are bidden with especial emphasis, which is shown by a change in construction, to 'take' or receive these.

For the word 'take,' in the original, differs from the 'taking up' of verses 13 and 16. It signifies the *accepting* of something offered by the hand of another. So the Thessalonians '*accepted* the word' brought them by St. Paul (1 Thess. i. 6) and Titus '*accepted* the consolation' given him by the Corinthians (2 Cor. viii. 17)—in each case a welcome gift. God's hand is stretched out to bestow on His chosen warrior the helmet of salvation and the sword of His word, to complete his equipment for the perilous field. 'Receive the helmet of salvation.' It is God's own workmanship, God's own gracious gift, and all that He asks us to do is to take it from His hands.

3. The helmet is the helmet of salvation. What is salvation? That great word negatively implies deliverance from evil of any kind, and, in its lower application, from sickness or peril of any sort. In its higher meaning in Scripture the evil from which we are saved is most frequently left unexpressed, but sometimes a little glimpse is given, as when we read that 'we are saved from wrath through him,' or 'saved from sin.' What Christ saves us from is, first and chiefly, sin in all aspects, its guilt, its power, and its penalty; but His salvation reaches much further than any mere deliverance from threatening evil, and positively means the communication to our weakness and emptiness of all blessings and graces possible for men. It is inward and properly spiritual, but it is also outward, and it is not fully possessed until we are clothed with 'salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.'

4. In St. Paul's rough draft of the Christian armour in Thessalonians the helmet is 'the hope of salvation,' here it is the salvation itself. This double representation is in full accord with all Scripture teaching, according to which we both possess and hope for salvation, and our possession determines the measure of our hope.

Indeed in Scripture our salvation is presented as past, as present, and as future. As past it is once for all received by initial faith in Christ; and, in view of their faith, Paul has no scruples as to saying to the imperfect Christians whose imperfection he scourges, 'Ye have been saved,' or in building upon that past fact his earnest exhortations and his scathing rebukes. The salvation is present if in any true sense it is past. There will be a daily growing deliverance from evil and a daily growing appropriation and manifestation of the salvation which we have received. And so Paul more than once speaks of Christians as 'being saved.' The process begun in the past is continued throughout the present, and the more a Christian man is conscious of its reality even amidst flaws, failures, stagnation, and lapses, the more assured will be his hope of the perfect salvation of the future, when all that is here tendency often thwarted, and aspirations often balked, and sometimes sadly contradicted, will be completely, uninterruptedly, and eternally realized. If that hope flickers and is sometimes all but dead, the reason lies mainly in its flame not being fed by present experience.

¶ Salvation to St. Paul was more than a step, it was also a walk. It was more than a crisis, it was also a prolonged process. It was more than the gift of new life, it was the maturing in growth and power. A drowning man, when he is lifted out of the water, is in a very profound sense vitally saved. But after this initial salvation there is the further salvation of recollecting his scattered consciousness, and of recovering his exhausted strength. And in a very glorious sense a man is spiritually saved in a moment; in a moment in Christ Jesus he passes from death into life. But it is also equally true that a man is only saved in a lifetime, as he appropriates to himself more and more the grace

and truth of the risen Lord. Yes, after we have been converted and saved, there is a further salvation in self-recovery, in self-discovery, all of which becomes ours in a fuller and richer discovery of Christ. Our possibilities of salvation in Christ Jesus stretch before us like range upon range of glorious mountains. When we have attained one range we have only obtained a new vantage-ground for beholding another; when that, too, has been climbed, still vaster and grander ranges rise into view. Every fresh addition to our Christlikeness increases our power of discernment, and every added power of discernment unfolds a larger vision and a more glorious and alluring hope. All believers in Christ Jesus have been saved. All believers in Christ Jesus are being saved. And therefore, says the Apostle, always wear the helmet of hope, 'the hope of salvation.'[1]

The Sword.

Eph. vi. 17.—'The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'

THE sword is a very ancient weapon, going back to the stone period. The first swords were made of flint, the stones being shaped and sharpened so as to be very effective. The next manufactured were of bronze, the blades being from fifteen to eighteen inches long. The Egyptians improved on these by making swords of iron with blades thirty inches long. After these came those of steel, the most perfect being made of Damascus steel. Formidable weapons some swords were. There were two-edged ones, the points turned outwards so that if they pierced a man he was almost torn to pieces before the weapon could be drawn out of him. Some were strong and heavy, and hurt a man as much by their weight as by their sharpness; others were of exceeding fineness, and did deadly execution by inflicting wounds which bled inwardly. But all these are not to be named with the Christian's sword, of which we read, 'For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.'

¶ Sir Walter Scott has vividly related how Saladin, the Emperor of the East, showed to Richard Cœur de Lion the fine edge of his Damascus blade, by snatching from the shoulders of an attendant a gauze shawl, throwing it into the air and cutting it into pieces as it floated to the ground.[1]

1. The comparison of speech to a sword is frequent in the Old Testament: 'whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword': 'who have whet their tongue like a sword, and have aimed their arrows, even bitter words': 'He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.' And in the Apocalypse Christ is represented as having a sword proceeding out of His mouth. The passage which is immediately in the Apostle's mind is Is. xi. 4: 'He shall smite the earth *with the rod* of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.' St. Paul gathers up these words into a new combination, 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (or, utterance) of God.'

2. The sword is the word of God. We are reminded at once of Heb. iv. 12 already quoted: 'The word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword.' But there (as in 1 Cor. xiv. 26; 2 Cor. ii. 17; Col. i. 25; 2 Tim. ii. 29) the original word is the larger and deeper word (*Logos*), signifying the truth of God in itself, and gradually leading up to the ultimate sense in which our Lord Himself is the 'Word of God,' revealing the Godhead to man. Accordingly the work of the Word there is that of the 'engrafted Word,' 'to divide asunder the soul and the spirit' within. Here, on the contrary, we have another expression (*Rhema*), signifying the Word as spoken; and St. Peter (in 1 Pet. i. 25) defines it exactly:

[1] J. H. Jowett, *The Whole Armour of God*, 108.

[1] W. J. Townsend, *As a King Ready to the Battle*, 102.

'The word of the Lord endureth for ever: And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.' We cannot, of course, limit it to Holy Scripture, though we naturally remember that our Lord used the Scriptures as His only weapon in the Temptation. It is the gospel of Christ, however and wherever spoken, able to put to shame and to flight the powers of evil.

This sword of the word Paul himself wielded with supernatural effect, as when he rebuked Elymas the sorcerer, or when he defended his gospel against the Judaizers of Galatia and Corinth. In his hand it was even as

> The sword
> Of Michael, from the armoury of God,
> . . . tempered so that neither keen
> Nor solid might resist that edge.

With what piercing reproofs, what keen thrusts of argument, what double-edged irony and dexterous sword-play did this mighty combatant smite the enemies of the cross of Christ!

¶ 'Then said Mr. Greatheart to Mr. Valiant-for-truth, Thou hast worthily behaved thyself; let me see thy sword. So he showed it him. When he had taken it into his hand and looked thereon a while, he said, Ha, it is a right Jerusalem blade. Then said Mr. Valiant-for-truth, It is so. Let a man have one of these blades, with a hand to wield it, and skill to use it, and he may venture upon an angel with it. He need not fear its holding if he can but tell how to lay on. Its edge will never blunt. It will cut flesh and bones, and soul and spirit and all.'

Turn now to the Valley of Humiliation, where 'poor Christian was hard put to it. For he had gone but a little way before he espied a foul fiend coming over the field to meet him; his name was Apollyon.' 'Then did Christian draw, for he saw it was time to bestir him; Apollyon as fast made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail. . . . The sword combat lasted for about half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent; for you must know that Christian by reason of his wounds, must needs grow weaker and weaker. Then Apollyon, espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now. And with that he had almost pressed him to death, so that Christian began to despair of life. But as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, saying, Rejoice not against me, oh mine enemy: when I fall I shall rise; and with that gave him a deadly thrust which made him give back as one that had received his mortal wound. Christian perceiving that, made at him again, saying, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." And with that Apollyon spread forth his broken wings, and sped him away, so that Christian saw him no more. . . . I never saw Christian all this while give as much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword; then indeed he did smile and look upward. . . . Then there came to him a man with some of the leaves of the tree of life, the which Christian took and applied to the wounds that he had received in the battle and was healed immediately.' Surely to watch expert fighters like these, who turn their battlefields into fields of glory, makes one more ambitious to possess and wield that same two-edged sword, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God![1]

¶ Sir Noel Paton, in his beautiful conception of Faith arming the Christian Knight, 'In Die Malo,' personifies Faith, and shows us the figure of a lovely girl, clothed in purest white, with a halo around her head, kneeling at the warrior's feet, and buckling on the Sword of the Spirit. On the pommel may be seen a divine hand pictured with the mystic letters Alpha and Omega, while in the grip of the hand is a bleeding lamb, bearing the banner of the resurrection. The guard bears a dove, the emblem of the Holy Spirit,

[1] Bunyan, *The Pilgrims' Progress.*

with the words: '*Gladius Spiritus Verbum Dei.*' The artist seems to have had almost the spiritual imagination of a Bunyan. Faith completes the soldier's armour by fastening the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, to the girdle of his loins, which is Truth.[1]

3. This sword is called the 'sword of the Spirit'—why? It may be because the sword is forged by the Spirit, just as we say a sword of Damascus, meaning one made in Damascus. Another interpretation, however, of the word 'of' seems to be the true one. It means not so much a sword fashioned by the Spirit as the sword used by the Spirit; so that we come to this truth that the utterance of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the weapon the Spirit Himself uses to overcome sin. The weapon is in our hands, it is true, but His Divine hand must grasp ours, or even the Word of God will be powerless in the fight. Do we realize this great truth? Do we ever say to ourselves, 'Unless the Spirit Himself uses me I can do nothing'? It may be said that we have the gospel, and that is the chief thing. True; but even the gospel of Christ is absolutely useless unless the Spirit of God is behind it.

Mysterious Presence, source of all,—
  The world without, the soul within,—
Fountain of life, O hear our call,
  And pour Thy living waters in.

Thy hand unseen to accents clear
  Awoke the psalmist's trembling lyre,
And touched the lips of holy seer
  With flame from Thine own altar fire.

That touch divine still, Lord, impart,
  Still give the prophet's burning word;
And, vocal in each waiting heart,
  Let living psalms of praise be heard.[2]

[1] John Burroughs.
[2] W. J. Armitage, *The Soldiers of the King*, 107.

The Sword of the Spirit.

Eph. vi. 17.—'The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'

1. The sword is the sword of the Spirit. The Apostles were distinctly and avowedly the spokesmen of the Holy Ghost. They spake as 'the Spirit gave them utterance.' And so their speech and their preaching 'was not with enticing words of man's wisdom,' 'but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' Their word proved itself literally a mightier thing upon earth than the Roman sword. They founded an empire which shattered the Roman dominion to fragments, and reorganized on an entirely new basis the form of human society. It was Christianity, and not the barbarians, that really broke up the Empire. The Empire began to die from the hour that the Apostolic preachers proclaimed the Kingdom of God and His righteousness to the world. The mightiest thing that has ever wrought in our world—wrought practically on the relations of men, on the forms and institutions of society, on the progress of mankind, in art, industry, law, and political organization—was this word of the Apostolic preachers. The word which that Spirit put into their hearts, and which flashed like fire from their lips, was mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin. It drove a shaft of light, it poured a flood, into the heart of the devil's domain of darkness. We must read their history, and the history of the world as it was transformed and saved by their gospel, if we would comprehend the sweep and the keenness of 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'

2. The sword is the word of God. Now in Greek there are two separate terms for 'word.' And one of them—the term used here—is plainly limited in application. It does not mean all utterance, it does not cover the whole of the God-given revelation. It corresponds, in form, to our English 'saying.' It means a particular message given at a particular moment. Each 'command' is such a 'saying,' the 'Ten Commandments' are simply called

'the ten words' or 'ten sayings.' When God speaks to a prophet He puts a 'word' into his mouth. In the Old Testament often and often we come across the formula 'the word of the Lord' 'came to' such and such a one. For instance, the phrase in 1 Sam.: 'The word of the Lord was precious in those days,' means that no message came to any prophet. God had ceased to speak to men, to make His will known to them. His people—Israel—were left in darkness; there came no guiding voice. The 'word of God' in our text must necessarily be such a 'word' as that. It is absolutely required by the form of the expression. It is a revelation of God, however that may come, which is the 'sword of the Spirit' in any given case. The man who has that with him is armed for 'the great encounter.'

¶ When the Maid of Orleans was put upon her trial by the wicked men who burned her, a careful record was made of everything she said. I have read an unpublished play dealing with her amazing story. The writer had taken pains to study all the records, and the words he put into her mouth, as she appeared in his play, were the words the ill-used maid had actually used. They are inconceivably wonderful. Each malicious interrogation was met by a simple answer, so direct, so wholly conclusive, that one said to oneself as one read: 'This is nothing but sheer inspiration.' Only guidance given from heaven could have produced these amazing rejoinders. That was how the 'word' came to her.[1]

3. How does the word of God come to us? Where shall we find it?

(1) First of all, we shall find it in the sacred Scriptures. We can get our sword from its splendid armoury. Here is the word that gives the revelation of truth, telling us how the great God thinks about things, and therefore, telling us how to think amid all the plausible errors of our time. And here, too, is the word that gives the revelation of duty, telling us what the great God would have us do. And here also is the word that gives the revelation of promise, telling us what resources are prepared for them who follow the fair gleams of truth and take the Divine road of duty and obedience. Yes, the word of God is in the old Book, and there we can find our sword.

¶ I once said, in course of a conversation with the late C. H. Spurgeon, 'Have you ever been able to trace the conversion of anyone directly to a single sentence you uttered?' 'No,' he replied, 'never to any special sentence or words of my own; but often to the utterance of a text or verse from the Word of God. So far as I can remember, that has always been the arrow which has found its way through the joints of the armour, and reached the heart of the sinner. And,' he went on, 'I will give you an instance of the truth of that. A good many years ago, the directors of the Crystal Palace wished to try the experiment of gathering a big congregation in the central transept, to hear some of the preachers of the day. . . . In order to test the acoustic possibilities of so vast a space, I went to the Palace early one morning, before the doors were opened to the public. I took with me two or three friends, who stationed themselves in different parts of the building, so as to tell me if my voice could be heard there. Standing in the orchestra, I began, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Years afterwards, my brother James was called out to see a dying man in Croydon: this man said to him: "I am a painter by trade; I used to be an utterly godless man, until one morning early, as I was painting up in the inside of the roof of the Crystal Palace, not dreaming that anyone was in the building, I was startled by hearing a voice ringing out, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' The words came home to me with such power of conviction that I became a believer in Christ and an unworthy follower of His. I afterwards was told that it was your brother's voice I heard. Please tell him this from a soul he was privileged to lead to the Saviour." '[1]

[1] F. B. Westcott, in *The Church Family Newspaper*, 29th Oct., 1915.

[1] J. W. W. Moeran.

(2) But sometimes the word of God is given to us, not through the medium of a book, not even the book of the Scriptures, but in a direct and immediate message to our own souls. Sometimes the Captain of our salvation gives us our sword without our having to make a recourse to the written word. He speaks to us as our sword with no intermediary between. The word of the Lord comes to us as it came to the herdman Amos, to the courtier Isaiah, to the fisherman Peter, and to the university student Paul. 'Hath he not promised, and shall he not do it'? 'Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.'

¶ As the central base of his mission work he fixed upon Saguane in Kiwai Island in the Fly River Delta. Having resolved to place at Saguane a native teacher named Maru and his wife, Chalmers accompanied them to that place in March, 1892.

Then followed one of the strangest and most mystical experiences in Chalmers's life. He had anchored his boat in the creek, and before going ashore he meditated on what course he should follow. It was an utterly unknown territory he was about to enter, and he knew not whether he would meet with friendliness, indifference, or hostility. His recent parting from his wife had doubtless caused him depression of spirit, for he records in language very unusual for him 'I was very cast down.' He had recourse to prayer for guidance; then leaving Maru in the boat he landed and walked along the beach alone. Suddenly, as if in answer to his prayer, he seemed to hear a voice speaking to him and saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.' Not yet thoroughly convinced, however, he sat down on a log and said in prayer, 'If Thine, O Lord, is the voice, teach me to hear and act'; and the response that came was 'Fear not! I am with thee, neither be thou dismayed'; and he thanked God and took courage.

[1] A. Small, *Chalmers of New Guinea*, 136.

The Word our Sword.

Eph. vi. 17.—'The sword . . . which is the word.'

WHAT is this Word which is to be our sword?

1. First of all, the Word of God is the whole thought of God; all the Divine ideas expressed in speech or writing by men. It is all the true, just, loving, wise and beautiful truths, which, derived from God, have been seized by men since the beginning of the world; the primary truths which have been arrived at in science, in art, in law, in morals and in religion. These are the Word of God among men. We are to use God's thought about a thing in fighting all other thoughts about that thing. For instance, we are to take God's thought about life, and use it as a sword to meet and destroy all mean and unworthy conceptions of life. We are to take God's thought about sin, and use it in combating all the lax and deadly conceptions of sin which are so loose and rampant in our own day. We are to take God's thought about holiness, and use it in fighting all ignoble compromises which may satisfy a poor standard in the kingdom of the letter, but which have no standing in the more glorious realm of the spirit. We are to take God's thought about worship, and fight all the little, mean, seductive ritualisms which so frequently strut about in royal and gorgeous robes, but which are empty of all vital spiritual wealth and power.

2. But this Word of God which is to be our sword is not only the word of Divine truth as laid upon the mind; it is also the word of Divine commandment as laid upon the will. It is a word which divinely reveals our personal duty, imposing upon us some imperative mission. Some word of God comes to us with the mysterious suggestion of obligation, and we often receive it over against some soft and wooing temptation to an indulgent indolence; and we are to take the Divine word of obligation, and with it fight and slay the soft seduct-

ion to ease. 'And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah . . . saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it.' Let us note the lines of this experience. The word of the Lord came to Jonah as an imperative and an obligation. It said 'Nineveh!' But another word came to Jonah, a soft, luxurious, seductive word, luring him to Tarshish. And there you have all the conditions of spiritual warfare; and the only way for the believer is to take the word of obligation, and use it as a mighty sword against the word of seduction; he must take his sword and slay it, or chase it in miserable flight from the field. The word of duty is the word of God, and therefore the word of duty is the sword against every plausible temptation that would snare men to disloyal ease.

¶ The most striking proof of Dr. Whyte's concentration upon his work for the Classes [for young men and women] was given when he refused—not for the only time—a pressing invitation to cross the Atlantic in order to preach and lecture at Northfield, on the ground that he could not spare sufficient time from the task which so absorbed his energies. In the autumn of 1897 he was speaking to his Men's Class on the words, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,' He threw out a warning to the students of Divinity present that, when they became ministers, they must not allow themselves to be drawn aside from a minister's main work, and added: 'I've tried, in my own way, to keep my own way. An American deputation waited upon me the other day and said some very flattering things of me, and asked me to come across to preach to five hundred students. I said to myself that I had five hundred students every Sabbath night, and that I wouldn't have had them if I had been going all over the country to preach to five hundred students here and there. So I refused.' [2]

3. There is still a third descriptive word about the sword, which corroborates and enriches the others. The word of God which is the sword of the Spirit is not only the word of Divine truth laying God's thought upon the mind; and not only the word of Divine commandment laying God's purpose upon the will; it is also the word of Divine promise laying God's strengthening comfort upon the heart. Just think of that fine sword, the word of promise, being handed to these young and tempted disciples in that awful, hostile city of Ephesus. We may imagine, without presumption, how they would apply the Apostle's counsel, and how the older men among them would train the younger men in the expert use of that shining sword. They would say: 'Whenever you go out to your work, amid all the cold, bristling antagonisms of the world, carry the sword of promise! When your circumstances seem to mock you because of your unnerving loneliness, whip out the sword of promise! When you appear to be in a minority of one, and the enemy swarms in menace around you on every side, carry this sword of promise in your right hand, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." And when the enemy taunts you because of your weakness, or your want of culture, or your lack of rank and social prestige, or your nobodyism and nothingism, whip out the sword and fight the taunt with Christ's word of promise, "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand"!' Thus would these disciples speak to one another, as disciples can speak to one another to-day. When the devil comes to us in our loneliness, in our weakness, in our seeming abandonment, let us lay hold of the word of grace, and fight all the enemies' taunts with the Divine promise, and pierce them through and through, turning the foe to rout and remaining more than conquerors on the hard and finely won field.

¶ In your temptations, run to the promises, they be our Lord's branches hanging over the water, that our Lord's silly half-drowned children may take a grip of them.[1]

¶ We seem to look upon God's promises as things reserved either for extraordinary Christians, or for ordinary ones, perhaps, upon extraordinary occasions—for seasons of imminent distress and difficulty—those great

[1] G. F. Barbour, *Life of Alexander Whyte*, 323.

[1] Samuel Rutherford.

water-floods in which we all, as if instinctively, turn to God as to a place to flee unto. Yet show me the Christian who believes in and lives by every word which comes out of the mouth of God, who expects to be answered in his prayers, to be aided in his deeds, to be strengthened in his conflicts, by the Saviour in whom his person is accepted; who, in the simplest affair of every-day life, does God's bidding, because in His Word He has so commanded it, and expects His help, because in the same Word He has promised it; and I will show you one, like St. Stephen, full of faith and of power—a Christian man or woman who, in Christ, is, and has all things.[1]

The Soldier's Prayer.

Eph. vi. 18.—'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.'

With all his shining armour, the soldier's equipment is not yet complete. There is one other vital thing to be named, and this the Christian warrior must take along with him, for his warfare will be hopeless if he leaves it behind. 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.'

1. Why should he pray? A praying warrior receives into his soul the grace-energies of the eternal God. The power of grace is just the holy love and strength and beauty of the Godhead flowing into the needs of the soul and filling them with its own completeness. Now we do not pray in order to make God willing to impart this grace, but in order to fit ourselves to receive it. We do not pray to ingratiate God's goodwill, but to open our souls in hospitality. We do not pray in order to create a friendly air, but to let it in, not to propitiate God but to appropriate Him. We do not pray to turn a reluctant God towards ourselves, but to turn our reluctant selves toward a ready and bountiful God.

I give myself to prayer;
  Lord, give Thyself to me,
And let the time of my request
  Thy time of answer be.

. . . . . .

The loud distressful cry
  With which I call on Thee,
Shall wake me, Lord, to find that Thou
  Canst give me liberty.

. . . . . .

Then be my heart, my world,
  Re-hallowed unto Thee,
And thy pervading glory, Lord—,
  O, let me feel and see.[1]

2. When should he pray? The answer of the veteran warrior Paul is 'always.' Not at some time, but at all times! 'Praying always.' But can we do that? We are called upon to earn our daily bread. We have to face a hundred different problems. Every bit of grey matter in our brain is devoting its strength to the immediate task. Is it possible for us to think of two things at once? Can we be thinking out some absorbing question in business, and at the same time be praying to God? One thing is surely perfectly clear, we cannot always be thinking of God. It is constitutionally impossible. But while we cannot always be thinking of God, and always speaking to God, we can always be mentally disposed toward Him, so that whatever we are doing there can be a mental leaning or bias towards His most holy will.

In physical gymnastics there is no need for us to be always exercising, to be at it every moment of the waking day. The body does not need it. Indeed, it would resent it, and rebel against it. But here is the healthy genius of gymnastic exercises. Regular exercises give the body a certain healthy pose, a certain vigour and excellence of carriage, which the body retains between the exercises when we are going about our accustomed work.

[1] Dora Greenwell, *The Covenant of Life*, 23.

[1] T. T. Lynch, *The Rivulet*, 47.

That is to say, conscious exercise makes unconscious habit. Our conscious exercise forces the body into attitudes which persist as habits when we are doing something else. We can retain the pose of the gymnasium on the street, and we can retain it without thinking.

¶ It is given him 'always to pray, and not to faint.' Not that he is always in the house of prayer, though he neglects no opportunity of being there. Neither is he always on his knees, although he often is, or on his face, before the Lord his God. Nor yet is he always crying aloud to God, or calling upon Him in words: for many times 'the Spirit maketh intercession for him with groans that cannot be uttered.' But at all times the language of his heart is this: 'Thou brightness of the eternal glory, unto Thee is my heart, though without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto Thee.' And this is true prayer, and this alone. But his heart is ever lifted up to God, at all times and in all places. In this he is never hindered, much less interrupted, by any person or thing. In retirement or company, in leisure, business, or conversation, his heart is ever with the Lord. Whether he lie down or rise up, God is in all his thoughts; he walks with God continually, having the loving eye of his mind still fixed upon Him, and everywhere 'seeing him that is invisible.'[1]

3. But the Christian soldier is not only a suppliant for his own spiritual health. He is much more than this. The Apostle counsels him to be a suppliant for the health of the entire Christian army. 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.' That is to say, the Christian soldier not only prays for the health of his own spirit, but for a healthy *esprit de corps* throughout the whole militant Church of Christ. It is his duty and privilege to be prayerfully jealous for all the saints, and for the spiritual equipment of all his fellow-soldiers on the field.

¶ Canon Robinson, in his little book on the Holy Spirit, tells of a monument which is placed on the walls of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. It is to the memory of a man who had been a soldier in the Peninsular war and at the close of it became a devoted minister of Christ. Deeply impressed by the need for revival he circulated a prayer which he asked all to pray. After his death it was carved on his monument, 'O God, for Christ's sake give me Thy Holy Spirit.' . . . But Canon Robinson goes on to suggest a flaw in that prayer. It is the word 'me,' a word he says which Christ never encouraged people to use. For God's gifts and graces are not for ourselves merely, they are for us all and for us all together. The Spirit cannot fully come to us till we learn to pray it together with our eyes on the world. Is not that what we need? How else will union come? How else will barriers fall? How else will the cleavages of social and national life be healed? How else will we rise into the fullness of a common life but as we learn to pray, knowing all it means of the entrance of God into our life, 'Give us Thy Holy Spirit.'[1]

4. And then, just to finish it all, and by one example to show how deep and wide is this ministry of supplication, the Apostle Paul asks the Ephesian soldiers to pray for him. 'And for me, that utterance may be given unto me.' Let us carefully note this, and let us observe its heartening significance. These immature Christians in Ephesus, trembling in their early faith, are asked to pray for the old warrior in Rome. He is now 'an ambassador in bonds,' held in captivity in imperial Rome, and the untried soldiers in Ephesus are asked to be sentinel-suppliants for the stricken soldier far away. And what does he want them to pray for? 'And for me, that utterance may be given unto me.' Mark the real inwardness of that appeal. A poor slave in Ephesus may, by his own prayer, anoint the lips of a great apostle with grace and power. What a vista of powerful possibility! Do all congregations realize that privilege and service concerning their ministers? 'For me, that utterance may be given unto me.' Do I realize that my prayers, obscure and nameless

[1] John Wesley, *Works*, viii. 343.

[1] James Reid.

though I be, can give utterance to a Paul, a Livingstone, a Moffat, or a Chalmers? Do I realize that I can pour grace upon their lips? What a brave and splendid privilege! Am I using it?

¶ Some years ago, the record of a wonderful work of grace in connexion with one of the stations of the China Inland Mission attracted a good deal of attention. Both the number and spiritual character of the converts had been far greater than at other stations where the consecration of the missionaries had been just as great as at the more fruitful place. This rich harvest of souls remained a mystery until Hudson Taylor on a visit to England discovered the secret. At the close of one of his addresses a gentleman came forward to make his acquaintance. In the conversation which followed, Mr. Taylor was surprised at the accurate knowledge the man possessed concerning this Inland China Station. 'But how is it,' Mr. Taylor asked, 'that you are so conversant with the conditions of that work?' 'Oh!' he replied, 'the missionary there and I are old college mates; for years we have regularly corresponded; he has sent me names of enquirers and converts, and these I have daily taken to God in prayer.' At last the secret was found! A praying man at home, praying definitely, praying daily, for specific cases among the heathen. That is the real intercessory missionary.[1]

Prayer.

Eph. vi. 18.—'Praying always (RV 'at all seasons') with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.'

Some of the characteristics of prayer, of St. Paul's own prayers, are mentioned in this verse.

1. We have a suggestion of the *variety of prayer*. All prayer is the same in essence; but it takes on different modes. It is not all asking. Sometimes it is only interchange, without any petition at all—talking to God for the pleasure of communion. Sometimes it is a sharp, short cry for help, like Peter's 'Lord, save me!' when he felt himself sinking. Sometimes it is merely the aspiration of the heart to God without a word, sometimes a half-conscious sympathy of thought with God, sometimes a formal public petition, sometimes a struggle to climb over self to God. We are to pray with *every* prayer, with *all kinds* of prayer.

¶ He is not always the most prayerful man who prays most regularly or most formally or most publicly. Sometimes more prayer is condensed into a sentence than is to be found in a whole series of prayer-meetings. I never can read without emotion the story of the good old German professor who sat studying until far into the night, and then, pushing his books wearily aside, was heard by the occupant of the next room to say, ere he lay down to rest, 'Lord Jesus, we are upon the same old terms.'[1]

2. The next sentence suggests the *seasonableness of prayer*—'praying *in every season*,' or *on every occasion*. Some people have been troubled by the familiar version, 'praying *always*,' and have asked very plausibly how it is possible for one to be always praying, if he is to do anything else successfully. There would be no real difficulty, even if this rendering were correct. Paul bids the Thessalonians 'pray without ceasing,' which is even stronger. The difficulty disappears when we take a broader view of prayer as including the habitual contact of the life with God everywhere. But our text adds, to the hint of varieties of prayer, that of *occasions* which call out these varieties. Leisure gives opportunity for deliberate, meditative communion; public worship, for formal supplication, confession, and thanksgiving; dangerous emergencies, for sharp, short cries to God. A stately liturgical formula would have been of little use to Moses at the Red Sea, or to the Syrophenician woman pleading with Christ for her stricken daughter. Every phase of a prayerful man's life suggests an occasion for

[1] E. M. Bounds, *Purpose in Prayer*, 130.

[1] M. R. Vincent, *God and Bread*, 250.

prayer; and prayer has varieties enough for every occasion. Take the single fact of temptation, out of which this discourse of the Apostle grows. How many occasions for prayer it furnishes! If Satan tempts in a variety of ways, he must be met with a variety of prayers. The Apostle's point, in short, is that life is full of occasions and suggestions of contact with God, and that a Christian is to avail himself of these.

¶ The covenant which Sir Thomas Browne made with himself is well known, but one may venture to refer to it once more: 'To pray in all places where quietness inviteth; in any house, highway, or street; and to know no street in this city that may not witness that I have not forgotten God and my Saviour in it; and that no parish or town where I have been may not say the like. To take occasion of praying upon the sight of any church which I see, or pass by, as I ride about. To pray daily, and particularly for my sick patients, and for all sick people under whose care soever. And at the entrance into the house of the sick to say, "The peace and the mercy of God be upon this house." After a sermon to make a prayer and desire a blessing, and to pray for the minister.'[1]

¶ In some of the American centres I understand that during the war a signal was given each noonday, and for one minute the business of the city ceased, that the people might consciously turn to God; it would be good if such public recognition of the need of prayer were to be given constantly in all lands, when both hands of the clock point directly upward. But we can each remember for ourselves; nor ought we to forget the call of the afternoon—Christ died at three o'clock.[2]

After midnight, in the dark
The clock strikes one,
New day has begun.
Look up and hark!
With singing heart forestall the carolling lark.

After mid-day, in the light
The clock strikes one,
Day-fall has begun.
Cast up, set right
The day's account against the on-coming night.

After noon and night, one day
For ever one
Ends not, once begun.
Whither away,
O brothers and O sisters? Pause and pray.[1]

3. We find next in order a statement of the *element and atmosphere of prayer*,—'in the Spirit.' The Apostle tells us that the only effective prayer is prayer *in the Spirit:* and by this he does not mean prayer when one feels like praying, or, as we popularly say, 'is in the spirit of praying'; nor does he mean when one prays *spiritedly*, with enthusiasm and fervour; but he means prayer under the impulse and direction of the Spirit of God. Paul, in that wonderful eighth chapter of Romans, tells us that we have a natural infirmity in prayer; that we know not how to pray as we ought; and that only the Spirit of God can help this infirmity and teach us to pray. No wonder, then, that he says in our text that it is not enough for us to use the varieties and occasions of prayer, but that we must also get into the element of prayer, and pray in the Spirit. Otherwise, prayer is only an evidence of infirmity, like the dim burning of a candle in foul air. Let us see briefly what the Holy Spirit does for prayer.

(1) He *creates a prayerful heart.* True prayer is the communion of a child with a father; and this Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry 'Father.' That is, the Holy Spirit creates a son's heart in us: 'The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' That is the first thing. We never can truly pray at all until we can pray 'Our Father!' We need the Spirit's aid in order to utter the very first words of the Lord's prayer.

[1] D. M. McIntyre, *The Hidden Life of Prayer*, 35.

[2] W. Y. Fullerton, *God's High Way*, 54.

[1] Christina G. Rosetti.

¶ One of Melanchthon's correspondents writes of Luther's praying: . . . Once I happened to hear him at prayer. Gracious God! What spirit and what faith is there in his expressions! He petitions God with as much reverence as if he were in the Divine presence, and yet with as firm a hope and confidence as he would address a father or friend. 'I know,' said he, 'Thou art our Father and our God; and therefore I am sure Thou wilt bring to naught the persecutors of Thy children. For shouldest Thou fail to do this, Thine own cause, being connected with ours, would be endangered. It is entirely Thine own concern. We, by Thy providence, have been compelled to take a part. Thou therefore wilt be our defence.' Whilst I was listening to Luther praying in this manner, at a distance, my soul seemed on fire within me, to hear the man address God so like a friend, yet with so much gravity and reverence.[1]

(2) Then, further, the Spirit *suggests the substance of our prayers*: 'We know not *what* we should pray for.' The Spirit searches our hearts, and lays bare their needs; and these needs in turn drive us to the mercy-seat.

¶ In the act of praying we are taught what to ask for and how to ask. Desires we intended to utter die into silence, and things we did not design to beseech become objects of our supplication. The judgment becomes cleared; impulses are awakened in us; things are revealed to us which we grasp rather than wait for.[2]

(3) And once more, what is most wonderful of all, the Spirit so identifies himself with our case that he makes intercession for us—intercession so earnest that Paul describes it as 'with unutterable groanings.' In other words, God's own heart pleads for us; and our mightiest plea is there.

[1] E. M. Bounds, *Purpose in Prayer*, 37.
[2] *Alexander Mackennal, Life and Letters*, 299.

Intercessory Prayer.

Eph. vi. 18, 19.—'Praying always . . . and for me.'

It is upon intercessory prayer that chief stress is laid in the passage now before us. St. Paul pleads first of all for supplication on behalf of all saints—that is, on behalf of all Christian believers without exception; and then he specially requests that the Ephesian Church should pray for himself in that critical position in which he then was, that he might acquit himself worthily when called upon to make his defence, and might bravely and effectively set forth the truth of the gospel. We think of St. Paul as the champion of the faith; but whilst we remember how strong and versatile and full of resource he was, we do not easily realize that he needed to ask for reinforcements of spiritual power through the earnest prayers of the Christian men and women whom he knew. Who can tell how much of the courage, energy, and serenity of the man, which made him so glorious an example of the Christian missionary apologist, may have come to him in answer to the intercession of saints unknown and long forgotten?

1. Habitual intercession for others is one of the surest correctives of the tendency to regard prayer as deriving its chief value and importance—not from the fact that God listens to us when we pray and gives us what we ask for—but from the influence which devotional thought, the confession of sin and of weakness, the grateful acknowledgment of God's goodness, and the contemplation of God's eternal majesty and glory, exert on our own spiritual life.

None of us can escape altogether from the prevailing temper of our time. Those of us who think that we are least affected by the currents of contemporary thought feel their power. The tendency to eliminate the supernatural element from the spiritual as well as the physical universe is affecting the whole life of the Church. Christian people can understand that when they pray their devo-

tional acts exert a reflex influence on their own minds and hearts; but to expect a direct answer from God requires a vigorous faith; and to this faith it is to be feared many of us are unequal. If Christian men are in trouble they are conscious that their hearts are lighter after they have spoken to God about it, just as their hearts are lighter when they have spoken about it to a friend; and they suppose that this kind of relief is all that they have a right to look for. They pray for stronger faith, and they suppose that it is by their own thoughts about God and His great goodness, thoughts which are made more vivid by the act of prayer, that their faith is to be strengthened. Or if they pray that their love for God may become more ardent, they imagine that it is by the very excitement of praying for it that the result is to be obtained. They think that their prayer will be ineffective if, while they pray, their hearts are not flooded with emotion; they are satisfied if the emotion comes, and if, to use their own words, they 'feel better' when the prayer is over.[1]

2. The duty of praying for others is one of the obligations arising from that great law which makes it impossible for any of us to live an independent and an isolated life. We are members of one body; if one member suffers all the members suffer with it; if one member is strong and healthy all the members share the health and strength. We are not fighting a solitary battle. We belong to a great army, and the fortunes of a regiment in a remote part of the field may give us an easy victory or increase the chances of our defeat. We are to offer supplication for 'all the saints.' Paul himself asked for the intercessions of the Ephesian Christians. He knew that by their prayers they might secure for him a clearness and a vigour of thought and a fearlessness of spirit which apart from their prayers he might not possess.

¶ There are Christian people whose life is so far removed from excitement, agitation, and peril, that they seem to have no opportunities for winning great moral victories; their powers are very limited, and they are not appointed to tasks of great difficulty and honour. Let them resolve to have their part in the righteousness of their comrades who face the fiercest dangers, and in the fame of the very chiefs and heroes of the great army of God. Let them pray for 'all the saints,' and their prayers will give courage, endurance, and invincible fidelity to those who are struggling with incessant temptations. Some Christian brother, who, under the stress of bad trade and unexpected losses, is almost driven to dishonesty, will preserve his integrity. Some young man, who is no longer sheltered by the kindly defence of a religious home and who is surrounded by companions that are trying to drug his conscience, to excite his passions, and to drag him down into vice, will stand firm in his fidelity to Christ. Some poor woman, harassed by anxiety, worn down by unkindness, will receive strength to bear her sorrows with patience, and will rise to a lofty faith in the righteousness and love of God. The feverish passion for wealth will be cooled in some Christian merchant, and he will obey the words of Christ charging him to seek first God's kingdom and God's righteousness. Some Christian statesman will have a clearer vision of Divine and eternal things, and the vision will enable him to master the impulses of personal ambition and to care only for serving Christ by serving the state. Saintly souls will become more saintly. New fervour will kindle in many a heart already glowing with apostolic zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men. New gifts of wisdom and of utterance will be conferred on some who are already conspicuous for their spiritual power and their spiritual achievements. By constant and earnest intercession for 'all the saints,' those who are living in quiet and obscure places may share the honours and victories of all their comrades, may have some part in the praise of their holiness, and some part in their final reward.[1]

¶ Every day should be 'All Saints Day.' It is far more urgent to intercede for the

[1] R. W. Dale, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, 438.

[1] R. W. Dale, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, 442.

saints than for the sinners: it is against Christ's chosen that the enemy hurls his fiercest darts; they fight on the high places of the field. It is far more important to pray for the saints than to contend with them.[1]

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.[2]

Prayer and Perseverance.

Eph. vi. 18.—'Praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance.'

1. A PRAYER is not in itself a complete action of the soul. It is the lofty beginning of such an action. Prayer at its deepest is involuntary, subconscious, ecstatic. It breaks from us like a cry. It is a cry—a cry out of the depths. In a sense, it is our own; but in an equal sense it is not our own. It is our own, for it was from our heart it broke; it is not our own, for we had not the ordering of it. But the instruction within these words, in which we are told to follow up our prayers with a further conscious and persistent action—the instruction seems to mean that we are to make our prayers our own, once they have been uttered. We cry out in an agony of desire or necessity; but after we have cried out, it is for us to say, by our own later behaviour, whether that cry was merely the cry of an animal in pain or terror, or the cry of a spiritual being from the depth and crisis of his need—a cry to which we shall be faithful in the sober hours and days of our life. In fact, the prayer was not ours, and was, strictly speaking, not a prayer, but a cry, unless we prove it to have been a prayer, and our prayer, by standing to it thereafter. Every true prayer is a moral summons; but having heard it, it is open to us either to obey or to refuse. From this point of view, a prayer is an opportunity for a new greatness of the soul, for a new devotion of ourselves. But it is what we do with ourselves after the prayer has broken from us which decides whether, once more, it was a prayer or a mere cry.

2. Good men everywhere and at every stage of spiritual life have been aware of the subtlety. It is a true sign that the good fight has begun in earnest within a man when he sees through himself and takes steps to outmanœuvre his own weaknesses. For there is always the danger that we shall fall away from our own best moments; and that man shows himself to be in earnest who lays plans to make it as hard as possible for him to unsay in his flat hours what he said when his spirit was aglow.

In consulting my edition of Carlyle's 'Cromwell' to verify a reference, my eye fell upon words which I had underlined—I suppose in my youth. And here let me say how fruitful an exercise it is to be on the look-out in this world for anything; because, even whether or not you find the thing you are looking for, you are sure to find other things by the way. It was when Saul was looking for his father's asses that he met Samuel and was secretly crowned king. To be on the look-out for fine things is a formula for the life of faith. Well, when I was turning over the pages of my Carlyle's 'Cromwell,' my eye fell upon these words, marked: 'Heaped embers which in the daylight looked black may still look red in the utter darkness.' That is a true thing beautifully said. But the converse is also true: 'Heaped embers which in the utter darkness looked *red* may still in the daylight look black.' Things which we see when our souls are aglow with some tension and necessity, we may lose sight of when that tension and necessity are loosened.

[1] W. Y. Fullerton, *God's High Way*, 56.
[2] Tennyson.

Is is against the danger of falling away from the high moral intention and momentary pledge of our hearts in prayer that St. Paul here warns us. He tells us, what if we are fair-minded we shall not dispute, that we have not really prayed, we have merely ejaculated, if we do not support and maintain the entreaty of the praying moment with a life of motives and purposes on something of the same level. The chief purpose of prayer is that we proceed upon it.

What are we to think of one—it may have been our own case—who prays to God that he may live a better life, or prays quite definitely that God shall help him to master and forsake some particular sin, some excess of the flesh, or some temper of mind, and who rises from his knees without any serious resolution in the matter? In the moment of praying he may have been entirely sincere. In that moment he may have seen quite clearly that if things go on with him as they have been going they can have only one end. He may even in the very moment of praying have felt that there was, with God, a real chance approaching certainty that he might get the victory over his disorderly nature. But once again, if such a man rises from his knees and takes no pains, exercises no thought, puts no pressure upon his own natural inertia, opposes no contradictions to the will of his flesh; if he appears to think that God will attend to matters which he himself is not proposing to attend to, why—that is superstition, and, like all superstition, a form of blasphemy. Such a man, and not one who wears a hair-shirt on his back, or carries peas in his boots for the good of his soul, is the truly superstitious man; for in such a man's belief and practice God is an idol, and a stupid idol at that.

3. Prayer is a state of tension and necessity, and it is a real danger that we be unfaithful to its poetry and unworldliness. It was doubtless to counteract such a danger that from the beginning men have come under vows. And it may very well be that we have abandoned the practice without being quite secured against the danger. It was for the same reason, it is for the same reason, that when a great emotion comes to us, bringing with it a new summons, we do well to commit ourselves as publicly as we can, so as to make it as hard as possible for us to trifle with our own serious moods. It was for this reason—and not in the first instance at least with any merely superstitious intention—that good people supported their prayers by fasting, or by the undertaking of uncomfortable and even irritating tasks: it was in order to keep themselves awake. It was a way of pinching their flesh to keep them from sleeping in the presence of God. And though certainly it would signify a higher kind of mental life to be able to remain awake without such a spur, still, rather than sleep when one should be awake, it is no folly if need be to pinch one's flesh.

Thoughts like these, which come to mind when we come to look into the heart of St. Paul's words here about 'keeping ourselves persistently awake' (for that is the meaning) along the line of our own prayers—thoughts like these have an urgency for us all.[1]

Watching and Perseverance.

Eph. vi. 18.—'Watching thereunto with all perseverance.'

THE ideas contained in the Greek words for 'watching' and 'perseverance' are striking and picturesque.

The word for watching implies not only earnest vigilance and alert attention, all the mind and body being on the strain and watch, but a steady resistance to the tendency to sleep or idle; to the desire to relax one's attention and efforts, or grow slack in purpose and labour. The disciples who were overcome with sleep in the Master's critical hour and danger are a warning to us to resist such tendencies, and especially to wrestle with the weaknesses and tendencies of the flesh, which are ever a clog and impediment to the free and upsoaring life of the spirit. The watch must therefore be kept in all 'perseverance.'

[1] J. A. Hutton, *On Accepting Ourselves*, 196ff.

The word for 'perseverance' is deeply significant. It implies (1) patience, that art of taking infinite pains which is a sign of genius or of its equivalent; (2) the steady application to work and study which makes the successful student the man of business; (3) that diligent employment of our time and talents for which God holds us responsible; (4) the firm adherence to principles; and, more than all (5), the faithful devotion to the Master, under whose banner we are serving. The word is found to bear these various senses in the Greek writers, Polybius, Xenophon, Diodorus and Demosthenes respectively. But while the favourite sense of the term with other writers is devotion to work, the true meaning of the word for Demosthenes was loyalty to a person. This suits the Christian especially; for his creed is summed up in one word—Christ. For Christ is the Head and Source of our faith. Christ, as He has revealed the Father, as He has ordained the sacraments and laid down the laws of spiritual life, as He gives forgiveness, consolation and hope to the sons of men, is Himself our creed. As we adhere to Him and His cause, steadfastly resisting every influence that is against Him, strenuously advancing every movement that is for Him, we shall have our time and talents well occupied; we shall keep our senses awake and alert; we shall watch in all perseverance.

What does this mean from a practical point of view?

1. It means we must *do something*. Doubt and hesitation interfere much with activity, and thus superinduce a state of pessimism or morbid melancholy. Hamlet is cited as an instance in which too much thinking upon the event palsied a man's hands and unnerved his soul. At least Shakespeare is supposed to have intended to represent in Hamlet the problem of a contemplative and philosophic spirit rudely called upon to act in a forcible and practical manner, and in a way repellent to his whole nature. For 'by action alone can doubt be resolved.' Whereas a morbid brooding upon the issues, a deliberate weighing of unknown and incalculable possibilities is able to turn aside not merely matters connected with the trivial round, the common task, but even to divert 'enterprises of great pith and moment' from the channels of action. Action, however, is the salt of life. It is a greater proof of life than thought. For action is the outward expression, the visible sign and seal of thought. And in action thought is recognized. The university of Cambridge, the Alma Mater of strenuous scientists, has a superior motto to that of Descartes. For *Ago, ergo sum,* 'I act, therefore I am,' is distinctly more English than *Cognito, ergo sum,* 'I think, therefore, I am,' and therefore more worthy of that school of learning which has not permitted its thought to remain inactive, but has sought to stir men not only to think rightly but to act nobly.

2. It means we must *do it with all our might*. Well said Charles Dickens in *David Copperfield,* 'My meaning simply is, that whatever I have tried to do in life, I have tried with all my heart to do well; that whatever I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely; that in great aims as in small I have been thoroughly in earnest.'

¶ If a Christian is but a shoe-cleaner, he should be the best in his parish.[1]

Be earnest, earnest, earnest!
Do what thou dost as if the stake were Heaven,
And that thy last deed ere the Judgment-day!
When all's done, nothing's done. There's rest above—
Below let work be death, if work be love.[2]

It means we must *persevere in it*. The Christian's chief work is an exercise unto godliness. This is the aim of all aims. 'For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Therefore it behoves us to persevere in this training, this exercise. For its principal demands on the soul of man are complete concentration, wholehearted self-surrender. And these spell effort, painful persistent effort. One cannot

[1] John Newton.
[2] Charles Kingsley.

acquire the qualities that are godly and heavenly by doing nothing but sitting idle. As it has been quaintly put, 'You cannot go to heaven in an armchair.' There is a constant vigilance and a continual self-control to be exercised by the Christian who is training for godliness. And this means steady application to the work and ideal before us. It is harder, in fact, to be good than to be great; to win purity than to win power; to deserve heaven than to win the world. The way of holiness, albeit for the ordinary way-faring man, is a select road. 'The ungodly shall not walk therein' (Is. xxxv. 8); but the simple folk shall not err therein. The character of holiness is difficult to attain. It is only the few who can really attain it; but it is incumbent on all to make the attempt. 'Train thyself rather unto godliness,' wrote St. Paul to Timothy.

¶ A young minister fresh from Keswick came into his study and spoke of his experiences with rapture, just as if the New Jerusalem had come. 'Ay,' said Dr. Whyte, 'it's a sair fecht up to the very last!' [1]

Ambassadors in Bonds

Eph. vi. 19, 20.—'The mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds' (RV 'in chains').

1. We spend our life in more or less successfully learning to give utterance to the individual message of our own souls. That which passes within the hidden chambers of the heart is utterly concealed from the knowledge of our fellows unless the silver key of speech shall set free the interpreting message of the heart which has been gathering form and force through the years of silence. Incalculable multitudes of sensory stimuli have fallen upon the sensitive terminal filaments of the nervous system. Unnumbered millions of impressions have been registered upon the cells of the brain. Every one of them has wrought its own reaction. Through the long years of childhood and youth we have been chiefly animated question boxes. Our lives have consisted in interrogating the world, which we have done by direct word, by tentative action, by experiment, and by choice. But as the years have elapsed, the experimental has become the judicial and the judicial has given place to the initiatory; and one day we awake to discover within our soul a newborn song, an evangel of great joy, a message of compelling force, an interpretation which will add to the riches of the world's understanding.

We cannot understand how it came there. It seems a thing apart from us; something which has come by direct revelation. But it goes on repeating and reiterating itself in a thousand differing forms. Its first burden is for ourselves. It is like a messenger from heaven sent to interpret all the questionings and doubts of life's conflicting experience. It harmonizes this difficulty and quiets that tremor, it hushes this disquieting thought and brings out the hidden meaning of that dark saying. Its illuminating ray casts light upon the path which we trod in darkness and enables us to leap to an understanding of the calamity, the meaning of which all our past searching had failed to reveal. It falls like a healing message of peace upon the raw and bleeding surface of feelings which have been lacerated through years of misunderstood suffering; it robs the bitter years of their root of irritation, and fills the blank days with a song of joy.

> Every soul hath its song
> Its melody divine
> Rising to ecstasy,
> And so hath mine.

¶ This is the feeling that comes to Sim Paris, the hero of Mr. Hutchinson's latest novel, *One Increasing Purpose*.

'A faith that would satisfy.' Sim had found it; it had been revealed to him; and his Purpose, disclosed to him at last, was, he knew instinctively and with no shade of doubt, to reveal it to his fellows. This was that for which, while in the world-war millions fell, he, in the heart of it, had been spared; this was that towards which ever since the war,

[1] G. F. Barbour, *The Life of Alexander Whyte*, 372.

insensibly but surely, he had been advancing. Clearly he could see as he looked back how sure, with what infallible progression stage by stage, and yet how unknown to himself, had been his preparation. He had felt dissatisfaction with all that in his accustomed way of life formerly had more than satisfied him, and he had left the army. He had felt a longing to find some sympathetic understanding to which he could confide the impulses that caused him to leave, and finding none had thought how universal was that need for sympathy, and realising that had his mind set in trains never before explored by him. He had gone amongst the labouring masses and their employers and had come from them with those feelings, outraging Andrew, of hearts taken away from brothermen when offices were closed. Strangely uneasy in those days, constantly remembering, and resentful of, that 'Of God' of Elizabeth's, 'I have the odd, uncanny feeling,' he had written to her, 'that God is *after* me'—and he had come to Old Ballard's and on his first night there been given for his text 'One Simon, him they compelled to bear His cross.' There had followed that ride home that evening when that light was in the sky; his involuntary cry, forced out of him, to God; his utter peace received by him when 'If I am shown herein my purpose and know that purpose thine . . . if, as with Saul . . . summons . . . if, as with Simon . . . to bear thy cross. . . . If these, O God, suffer me some truth that I can understand,' he had prayed. And then had followed K.O.H.; and then beside the exquisite tranquillity of Old Gand's sanctuary in death the revelation that that Kingdom of Heaven was not in a heaven remote, inaccessible, mysteriously beyond a man's conception, but here in the heart of every human soul that breathed. And now—

Plain as a mountain path ascended and looked back upon, he saw the way that he had come; clear as the prospect set before the climber who has gained, at last, the summit, he saw the truth to which at last he had been brought.[1]

[1] P. 356.

2. Immediately there is borne in upon us a vision of the reaction our message will produce among our fellows when it goes ringing out to the world, and a newborn impression of necessity is laid upon us: 'Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.' We feel the utter necessity for self-expression and repeat the prophet's experience: 'His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing and I could not stay' (Jer. xx. 9).

Now one of the greatest tragedies of the soul-life is to awake and discover one's self to be dumb. Dumbness of the soul is dependent upon two main causes.

(1) It may be due to the fact that through all the years wrong choices have been made, unworthy pursuits followed, and low ends sought. The sorting of the impressions received from without has been from the point of view of personal gratification, and the reactions growing from it have been poor and cheap. So that when the soul awakens, if ever it does, it finds no accumulation of riches, no store of inner wealth to share with the world, and the life passes songless and dumb among its fellows. For the message of the soul is wrought only through years of earnest seeking for the best, through a determination to deny the faithless wavering of the spirit and to cling to the assurance that the light of an understanding day will dawn. We learn to 'comfort others with the comfort wherewith we ourselves have been comforted of God' (2 Cor. i. 4).

How poverty-stricken is the soul which through all the years has sought only the lower good, ministering merely to the pleasure of the moment. Dumb, because it has never accumulated impressions of the need of others and how that need may be met; inarticulate, because it has never extracted from life the inner meaning of its multiplying phenomena and related it to the message of the Master of life; songless, because it has composed no symphony of unselfish service from the strains of melody which have come to it from other lives.

(2) The other cause of dumbness is less

terrible, for while the soul may dwell in silence, it is not for lack of a message, but because it has never learned to express this message in the hearing of others. There are individuals to whom expression comes as naturally as breathing, and there are others who find it well-nigh impossible to put into words the thoughts of their hearts. Their dumb souls struggle to break the bonds which fetter them, but they have never learned speech, and the world is robbed of their message unless perchance they can express it through life and action. This also is possible, for there are silences which are eloquent, and there are humble souls whose stammering tongues have never been able to voice their feelings, who yet put the stamp of a great spirit upon the world by lives of unselfish devotion and quiet usefulness.

There is other speech than that of the vocal organs. One man's message comes to him in the silence of the scientific laboratory and is expressed in chemical formulas which will render easier the hard lot of countless of his fellows. To many a woman the crystallization of her soul's thinking has led to the crowded ward of the metropolitan hospital, and she has spoken eloquently to many sufferers through the strain and toil of days and nights which are given to no routine fulfilment of perfunctory duty but to gentle ministrations of utter faithfulness. Perhaps most difficult of all is it for the factory toiler, whose task lies in the monotonous repetition of a single group of motions through long hours of the day, to find his own message and give it adequate expression; and yet even here the soul which has sought for the higher interpretation of life will discern the Master standing by the loom, and will learn from His lips the word which shall relate the monotonous task and all the dull routine of life to the higher purposes of eternity, and so through patient endurance, honest service, blameless conduct, and human sympathy will find a way to express the song of the soul.[1]

[1] P. H. J. Lerrigo, in *The Biblical World*, liv. 37ff.

Dear heart, thou thinkest, with a sigh,
'My life is walled about:
To few of them that travel by
It reaches kindly out.'

And yet thy lamp a beam doth shed
That cleaves the night apart:
Shall no benignant glory spread
Around a kindled heart?

The thought that inward seemèd most
Hath passed upon the breeze,
And lives, a pure and perfumed ghost,
A waft from Eden trees.[1]

The Core of Christianity.

Eph. vi. 24.—'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.'

THE text declares the three truths that lie at the core of Christianity.

1. The *central force of Christianity is love.* Wherever there is a genuine Christianity, there, also, is a manifestation of love; and wherever in any professed Christianity love is absent, it matters nothing what else be present—the absence of love proclaims the absence of true Christianity. Therefore, if the question arises whether this or that church is a Christian church, we do not ask what was its origin, what is its history, what are its customs, nor even primarily what is its creed. But we ask, is it a loving church? Are its members distinguished for their love to God, for their love to the brethren, for their love to the world Do its services inspire love? Do its organizations promote love? Tell me it is a church which teaches men to love the Lord their God and to love their neighbours as themselves, and I will hail that church as a true Temple; I will grasp its members by the hand as my brothers and sisters in the Lord.

¶ Mr. Kennedy Williamson, in his chapter on the 'Geometry of the Circle' in *The Uncarven Timbers*, writes: The nearer any radius

[1] F. Langbridge, *Little Tapers*, 38.

approaches to the centre, the nearer does it approach the radii on either side of it.

That is to say, if you draw your finger along the spoke of a wheel towards the hub, by the same motion you draw closer to all the other spokes that are also converging upon it. The nearer a man comes to Christ, the nearer does he approach to his fellow-men. If a man love Him, he will inevitably love his brother also. One cannot catch anything of the spirit of Christ without feeling the passion arising to serve and save one's brethren. There is always a two-fold approach, the nearer to the centre, the nearer to the radii.

There is a cheap reproach levelled at Christianity from time to time, that it induces an other-worldliness in which men swoon comfortably into beatific visions and let the old world go sinning and suffering on. Mr. Blatchford once wrote a book entitled *God and My Neighbour*. The inwardness of that title was to suggest that the two are distinct, and that the man of religion serves God, while he turns a blind eye to his neighbour. If that is ever true of Christianity, it is a spurious Christianity, for the ideal of the Christian is 'God *in* My Neighbour.' The Father is so perfectly identified with His children that whoso injures them touches the apple of His eye. Abou ben Adhem who loved his fellow-men was found to be foremost in the list of those whom love of God had blest. The impulses of the heart, Godward and manward, are twin, and they act together. . . . The nearer we get to our Lord the nearer are we drawn to our fellows. As a radius approaches the centre, it cannot help approaching nearer to the radii beside it. It is a necessity of spiritual geometry.[1]

2. The *central person of Christianity is the Lord Jesus Christ.* In the early Church Christ was indeed the central Person; and the love of Christ their grand confederating bond. That mighty personal Love was an irresistible force. Prejudices fell before it, like the walls of Jericho before the trumpets of Israel. Social, national, religious distinctions waned in its presence. The Church of the living God was a community where there was neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ was all and in all! Even so, we have no new Christianity. It is to-day as it has been from the beginning, and as it shall be evermore. All our Christianity centres in the Lord Jesus Christ. In His atonement we place our simple trust. His teachings we accept. His commandments we obey. In His name we present our prayers. To His praise we lift our songs. From His hands we receive the gifts of grace. For His sake we are made heirs of glory. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. And for ever the central Person of Christianity is the Lord Jesus Christ.

¶ I can't lie down without telling you of the very beautiful, soothing influence one thing has (perhaps unexpectedly) over me. I mean the perfect lovingness and charity in which we all of such opposite faiths live together, and have just knelt and prayed together. There seems to me something so inexpressibly touching and happy in it,—everyone seems so loving to the rest, so far from cavilling for 'words and names': each so absolutely free and all so far from seeking to proselytize. At meals we stand round the table,—'Nous voulons prier, mesdemoiselles,' and in silence everyone together thanks God 'in his own tongue,'—one marking only that some cross themselves silently and some do not. Then at night we kneel together,—we have a fine loving German hymn, and a text for us all,—words lovingly pronounced by our Roman Catholic head that yet every Presbyterian minister might say. There seems to me something so inexpressibly soothing in this union,—so far stronger than all differences. I can hardly tell you the rest and refreshment it is to me now, worn and weary as my spirit is. It struck me very much in its beauty to-night as Miss von Palaus pronounced,—'There is but one name given under heaven among men whereby we may be saved,' and we all received it on our knees,—Protes-

[1] P. 277.

tants and Romanists, Unitarians and Trinitarians,—each 'in his own tongue.' Was it not beautiful how just that name bound us all together,—Christians,—seeking at least the spirit of Christ who loved us all,—our Master,—that we might 'love one another.'[1]

3. The *central mark of Christianity is grace.* And grace is a gracious spirit, gracious speech, gracious habits, a gracious Christian. Grace on the brow, a witness for sanctified intelligence; grace in the eye, for looks of sweetness and for scrutiny of truth; grace on the lip, for words of cheer and words of power; grace in the heart, a fountain of running waters, bringing perennial refreshment to the world; grace in the hand, that whatsoever it finds to do be done unto the Lord; grace in the feet that are swift upon errands of mercy, and beautiful upon the mountains with good tidings of salvation. The prayer of the text is answered in true Christian lives, and grace is upon all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

¶ Everything you need to make you good, wise, humble, lovely, useful, and happy, is comprehended in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you care for yourself and your immediate friends only, and not for others also, is it not that you have too little of the grace of Christ? Or if you show a self-loving partiality for your own Church, and a prejudice against other Churches, would not more of the grace of the Lord Jesus enlarge your heart, and correct the one-sidedness of your character? If you carry yourself haughtily towards any one, is not that a sign that your own spirit is strong, and the grace of Christ weak in you? Do not your impatience, irritability, and anger give evidence of your deficiency in grace? If you are fretful or downcast under suffering, would not more of the grace of Jesus produce in you an exactly contrary condition? If you surrender your tongue to foolish talking, does it not argue an absence of the dignity and wisdom which are in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? If you fall into any vice or sin whatsoever, would not a greater measure of His grace restrain you? It is clear, therefore, that the grace of Christ is precisely what you want to make you everything that you should be. It is everything that can relate you happily to God and advantageously to man. One word expresses the whole circle of your wants. For that one word, Grace, stands for 'the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.' It is the virtue of His all-perfect Humanity operating within you, the one thing that roots, grows, and opens in us every excellence and charm of spirit and character.[1]

¶ You have been rejoicing in the inexhaustible grace of Jesus: now be *yourself* gracious! You have been in the presence of God, and God is love: now be *yourself* tender-hearted and affectionate! You have enjoyed the radiant fellowship of the Holy Spirit: now be *yourself* companionable and inspiring! I remember to have read of a Valley of Roses. It is so extensive, and the lovely odours hang so heavily about the beauteous vale, that the traveller who passes through it carries the perfume on his person for days afterwards, and people look knowingly at each other as he enters the room. They know it without being told that he has been in the Valley of Roses.[2]

Into my hand, when in the bath one day,
They gave a piece of sweetly-scented clay:
'Art thou then musk or ambergris?' I said,
'Which dost around such rare aroma spread?'
'Clay,' it replied, 'I am, mere worthless clay,
But near the rose I tarried many a day;
Its fragrance made me fragrant to the core,
Else am I only what I was before.'[3]

[1] *Life of Sophia Jex-Blake*, 129.

[1] J. Pulsford, *Christ and His Seed*, 247.
[2] F. W. Boreham, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 270.
[3] Saadi.

Love that is Immortal.

Eph. vi. 24.—'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity' (RV 'in uncorruptness').

'In sincerity'—but the original word is far stronger—'in incorruptibility,' says Dr. Armitage Robinson.[1] There is nothing in the immediate context that leads up to or helps to explain this phrase. The word 'incorruptibility' has not occurred in the Epistle: but the Apostle uses it elsewhere in the following passages: 'To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and *immortality*'; 'It is sown in corruption: it is raised in *incorruption* . . . for this corruptible must put on *incorruption*,' etc.; 'Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and *immortality* to light through the gospel.' It signifies that imperishableness which is an attribute of God Himself, and which belongs to the unchanging order of the eternal world. Imperishableness is the characteristic of our new life in Christ and of our love to Him. That life and that love are in truth immortal; they belong to a region which is beyond the touch of decay and death.

Love for Christ is immortal, agrees Dr. Dale in his *Lectures on the Ephesians*.[2] The religious passion which is created by sensuous excitements, whether these excitements are addressed to the eye or to the ear, whether they heat the blood or intoxicate the imagination, is transitory. It has in it the elements of corruption. But true love for Christ is rooted in all that is deepest and divinest in human nature. It is immortal, for it belongs to that immortal life which comes to us by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. It will not decay with the decay of physical vigour. It will triumph over death; and will reveal the fullness of its strength and the intensity of its fervour in those endless ages which we hope to spend with Christ in glory.

Love loveth Thee, and wisdom loveth Thee,
The love that loveth Thee sits satisfied;
Wisdom that loveth Thee grows million-eyed,
Learning what was, and is, and is to be,
Wisdom and love are glad of all they see;
Their heart is deep, their hope is not denied;
They rock at rest on time's unresting tide,
And wait to rest thro' long eternity.
Wisdom and love and rest, each holy soul
Hath these to-day while day is only night:
What shall souls have when morning brings to light
Love, wisdom, rest, God's treasure stored above?
Palm shall they have, and harp and aureole,
Wisdom, rest, love—and lo! the whole is love.[1]

[1] *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 137.
[2] P. 445.

[1] Christina G. Rosetti.

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